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LOVE AND NARRATIVE IN THE NOVELS OF LAWRENCE DURRELL

BY

CANDACE EVELYN FERTILE

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A THESIS
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Love and Narrative in the Novels of Lawrence Durrell" submitted by Candace Evelyn Fertile in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosphy.

Gary Kelly
(Supervisor)

Dale Wilkie

Lee T. Lemon

Date: 7 October 1988

For my mother

Abstract

This thesis traces Lawrence Durrell's development as a novelist by examining the theme of love and the narrative structure of the novels. Beneficial love for Durrell is essentially adult, heterosexual, and procreative. It is a way to knowledge of the self and of others. Formally, Durrell's novels show a development from modernism to postmodernism, and the form also demonstrates a concern with knowledge. The first chapter examines four apprenticeship novels: *Pied Piper of Lovers* (1935), *Panic Spring* (1937), *The Black Book* (1938), and *The Dark Labyrinth* (1947). Chapters Two and Three are on the theme and form of the Alexandria Quartet, which consists of *Justine* (1957), *Balthazar* (1958), *Mountolive* (1958), and *Clea* (1960). Chapter Four is on *Tunc* (1968) and *Nunquam* (1970), which together form *The Revolt of Aphrodite*. Chapters Five and Six deal with the Avignon Quintet, which consists of *Monsieur: or The Prince of Darkness* (1974), *Livia: or Buried Alive* (1978), *Constance: or Solitary Practices* (1982), *Sebastian: or Ruling Passions* (1983), and *Quinx: or The Ripper's Tale* (1985). The thesis also contains an introduction and a brief conclusion.

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Introduction

Lawrence Durrell: A Twentieth Century Novelist

Lawrence Durrell's career as a novelist has paralleled the development of the novel in English in the twentieth century. Beginning with *Pied Piper of Lovers* in 1935 and culminating in *Quinx: or The Ripper's Tale* in 1985, his thematic interests parallel those of the twentieth century. His central thematic concern--the pursuit of knowledge--can be divided into sub-categories of ways of gaining knowledge, such as love, sex, art, religion, psychology, philosophy, and science, and these ways of gaining knowledge are the most common ones of the twentieth century. Durrell's formal concerns also illustrate the prevailing ones of this century: he has moved from modernism to postmodernism. More important, Durrell has continually sought new formal means to advance his central thematic concern, and this has made him a significant literary innovator. In his individual novels, and his fictional *oeuvre* as a whole, Durrell examines and explores the various ways of disseminating knowledge through narrative form.

That Durrell writes novels in groups is a significant factor in his achievements as an innovator. At least one critic, James A. Brigham, sees the three early novels, *Pied Piper of Lovers* (1935), *Panic Spring* (1937), and *The Black Book* (1938), as a trilogy. Only one novel, *The Dark Labyrinth* (originally published in 1947 under the title

Cefalû), stands clearly alone. *Justine* (1957), *Balthazar* (1958), *Mountolive* (1958), and *Clea* (1960) form the Alexandria Quartet, and they were planned that way. *Tunc* (1968) and *Nunquam* (1970) were published together in 1974 under the title *The Revolt of Aphrodite* and were planned as companion volumes. *Monsieur: or The Prince of Darkness* (1974), *Livia: or Buried Alive* (1978), *Constance: or Solitary Practices* (1982), *Sebastian: or Ruling Passions* (1983), and *Quinx: or The Ripper's Tale* (1985) form the Avignon Quintet, again planned as such. Each novel deserves individual attention, but it also must be looked at within the larger context of the set to which it may or does belong because what Durrell is doing in individual novels is heightened by the text's place in the sets.

Lawrence Durrell is a writer in the fullest sense. For in addition to these novels, he has written an adventure novel, humourous short stories about diplomatic life, poetry, travel essays and books, drama, literary criticism, essays, and several introductions and prefaces, and a complete list of these works fills several pages.[1] But his reputation and his literary ambition are best represented by his novels, which will accordingly be the central focus of this thesis.

The nine novels of the Quartet and Quintet provide in themselves enough material for an analysis of Durrell's development, and they are certainly recognized as Durrell's major works. However, examining the lesser known works can add to an understanding of Durrell's work. The lesser known (and usually less successful artistically) novels are very important for an analysis of theme, and they often give an illustration of forms that Durrell is trying out and eventually refines in the Quartet and Quintet.

If, as stated at the outset, the main theme in all of Durrell's works is that of knowledge and the ways of gaining knowledge, such as love, sex, art, religion, psychology, philosophy, and science, he seems finally to say that love is by far the most important way to knowledge but that the other ways are important insofar as they lead to an examination and elucidation of the self. In many cases what Durrell shows in his work is the failure to gain knowledge through many of these ways, and in a sense he provides instruction, through his characters, about pitfalls in the search for knowledge.

In Monsieur Akkad says, "We can make amends by loving correctly" (143). Loving incorrectly has the opposite effect: pain and destruction, both physical and emotional, are the results of faulty loving. Durrell's novels include examples of both positive and negative manifestations of love: love is pervasive in all of Durrell's novels, and an examination of what Durrell means by it is crucial. Faulty love does not lead to knowledge of oneself or others; generally it leads to ignorance and separation. Beneficial love, in contrast, does offer knowledge of the self and others, and it is a means to unifying individuals. The importance of love to Durrell's work can be seen in his comments regarding the Quartet. In an interview in Two Cities in reply to the question "You have called your series of novels 'an investigation of modern love.' Is this a serious claim?" Durrell said:

> Yes, it is a serious claim I suppose--love as the point faible of the psyche; human and divine love. Also don't forget that Freud has disintegrated "the old stable ego" (Lawrence) and restored the double-sexed Eros of Plato. There is such a thing as "modern love." But I hope to suggest that it itself is only a way of growing, a nourishment which prepares one for other problems, perhaps deeper ones? ("Lawrence Durrell Answers . . ." 26)

In the same interview, he refers to love as "a form of metaphysical enquiry" (26). Love, then, is a means, not an end--a means to self-discovery and self-determination, a way of knowing.

In his works, Durrell explores the ways in which characters know themselves and their world. His novels emphasise the importance of self-knowledge along with the difficulty of obtaining it. In addition, self-knowledge is possible only when characters have a sense of others; that is, self-knowledge is not a means of separating characters but a means of bringing them together through understanding. To understand oneself is to understand others, thereby breaking down the distinction between the subject, the "I," and the object, the "you" or "one." The acceptance or understanding is based on knowledge, and Durrell's works offer a compendium of ways knowledge can be sought. Love is ultimately the way to eliminate the distinction between the subject and object. In addition to pursuing this idea thematically, Durrell also does so formally. By the end of the Quintet, Durrell has destroyed the separation of the two levels of reality or fiction presented in his novels and has characters from different levels of reality communicating. This technique may strain our "willing suspension of disbelief," but this is precisely the desired effect. The only way to unification or love is a new way of seeing. Changes in perception are necessary in order to gain knowledge, and in the Quintet, Durrell radically changes our perception of the novel because of the proliferation of fictional presentations of reality.

Not easily separable from love, at least in Durrell's works, is sex. Heterosexual sex between adults is seen as the norm, but other manifestations are fairly common and are seldom dealt with as being perverse. These include both male and female homosexuality, which Durrell often labels "inversion"; incest, usually between brother and sister; bi-sexuality, usually female; and prostitution, involving both males and females, adults and children. The importance of sex is explained by Clea to Darley thus:

> Paracelsus says that thoughts are acts.
> Of them all, I suppose, the sex act is
> the most important, the one in which
> our spirits must divulge themselves.

> Yet one feels it a clumsy paraphrase of the poetic, the noetic, thought which shapes itself into a kiss or an embrace. Sexual love is knowledge, both in etymology and in cold fact; "he knew her" as the Bible says! Sex is the joint or coupling which unites the male and female ends of knowledge merely--a cloud of unknowing! When a culture goes bad in its sex all knowledge is impeded. (739)

In his works Durrell explores many aspects of sex, and in these explorations usually shows the negative effects of sex which is used for ends other than knowledge.

Another way to knowledge that pervades Durrell's works is art, especially art that is in a visual medium: paint or the printed word. Painters include Frances in Panic Spring, Campion in The Dark Labyrinth, and Clea in the Quartet. There are many writers: Lawrence Lucifer and Death Gregory in The Black Book; Baird and Graecen in The Dark Labyrinth; Darley, Pursewarden, Keats, and Arnauti in the Quartet; Sutcliffe, Blanford, and Bloshford in the Quintet. Becoming an artist, in Durrell's novels, means gaining self-knowledge often through a certain degree of suffering. Although the connection between humanity and creativity is implicit throughout the novels, it is expressed explicitly in the Quartet when Clea says that she has become "a real human being--an artist at last" (877). By the Quintet the focus has shifted somewhat from the development of the artist to the development of the human being, and being an artist in the conventional sense is no longer necessary to the achievement of humanity.

What is important is making connections on a personal level.

Another way to knowledge is religion, and as with all the other ways, the novels tend to show the negative aspects. Christianity is criticised, while gnosticism becomes increasingly important as a system of knowledge. However, Durrell makes it clear both within and without the novels that gnosticism is not the answer. If there is any established religious path to follow, it is a very personal Eastern type of religion. Along with an emphasis on gnosticism, Durrell develops a consistent pattern of imagery using light and seeing, and also eyes and mirrors. These patterns of imagery fit in very well with his overall theme of knowledge.

In the twentieth century knowledge of the self can also be gained or at least approached by psychological methods, in particular psychoanalysis. Just as Einstein discovered a new way to look at the world, Freud discovered a new way to look at the individual. Psychoanalysis plays an important role in *The Dark Labyrinth* and in the Quintet, which both have psychoanalysts as main characters. In addition to Freud, Jung is important, and so is a much lesser known psychologist named Georg Groddeck, whose theory of the "It" is explained by Durrell in *A Key to Modern British Poetry*. Groddeck's theory is not dealt with directly in the novels, but it does have an effect on how Durrell views the human self.

The exploration of the self through psychoanalytic methods is a twentieth century phenomenon, but as Peter Brooks points out, the psychoanalytic method makes use of narrative, and particularly memory in the recreation of the past. Story-telling appears to satisfy a basic need in human beings, a need that Brooks believes is created by the fact of man's mortality. He writes: "since psychoanalysis presents a dynamic model of psychic processes, it offers the hope of a model pertinent to the dynamics of texts" (36). In this regard The Dark Labyrinth and the Quintet illustrate the twentieth century concern with finding the self or even creating the self through memory and analysis. The use of the case history in the Quintet is not unique. D.M. Thomas, for example, uses the case history format in The White Hotel, as does Robertson Davies in The Manticore.

Philosophy is a much older discipline than psychoanalysis, and as such receives its due attention as a way of gaining knowledge. Philosophy, particularly that of the Greeks, informs or underlies much of Durrell's fiction. Linked to philosophy is science, which plays a major role in Tunc and Nunquam, novels which may be seen as science fiction, but which in their consideration of what it means to be human also underline basic philosophical questions of metaphysics and ontology. Memory becomes the key to the creation of a pseudo-human.

With the memory machine called Abel, Felix Charlock reproduces a dead woman named Iolanthe, and it becomes not only impossible to tell the difference between her and a real person but also impossible to tell the difference between her and the real Iolanthe. Because the dummy has the memory of the real woman--her record of time, in fact--the dummy for all intents and purposes is the real woman. The crisis in the novels is precipitated when the dummy Iolanthe decides to escape her creators to live as an independent human being. She, like all humans, has been given the corporeal framework, but she feels that in itself does not create the self. To be truly human means having some kind of control over her time, to control her narrative in effect. Of the titles of these two novels, Durrell has remarked, "What I wanted was to establish right from the start the two time scales of the narrative: then, which suggests the distortion of the imaginary, and now, which opens the way to reality"(Alyn, 135). Durrell appears to be suggesting here that the past can be only imaginary--or perhaps imagined. The opening of the way to reality through the "now" is also attempted in narrative through a distortion of our perception of time, as Peter Brooks points out:

> If the past is to be read as present, it is a curious present that we know to be past in relation to a future we know to be already in place, already in wait for us to reach it. Perhaps we would do best to speak of the anticipation of retrospection as our chief tool in making sense of narrative, the master

> trope of its strange logic. (23)

It is precisely the logic of narrative that Durrell is exploring in his works, and like other writers of this century, he tends to become not only more experimental but also less logical in the conventional sense, in that various layers of fictional reality begin to overlap, coincide, and influence each other to create another plane of reality, or another plane of knowledge, one that is reached by collapsing accepted uses of time and narrative.

The link between Durrell's thematic and formal concerns is a strong one: over and over he shows that love is the key to knowledge, and this thematic concern is mirrored in his steady formal experimentation with how to tell the story or disseminate knowledge. One of his major experiments is with point of view. Within his novels Durrell demonstrates an interest in shifting points of view, and these shifts are emphasised when the broader canvas of a quartet or quintet is used. The novels of his Quartet and Quintet, although individual works, form larger novels in themselves. And it is in the handling of point of view that the innovation comes in. Durrell's treatment of point of view follows to some extent the treatment of it in the novel in English in this century. Thus, for example, The Black Book is firmly within the tenets of what can be called modernism, the Quartet demonstrates aspects of modernism and postmodernism, and the Quintet is thoroughly postmodern.

Shifting points of view are not Durrell's invention, nor is his other main area of experimentation, the disruption of time. Durrell's innovation is the combination of the two in conjunction with the multiplicity of novels in sets. Many novelists have written serial or sequential novels or *roman fleuve*, but the Quartet and Quintet do not fall into this category because of their lack of linear development. The major sets of novels in this century include the following: Marcel Proust's seven volume *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927; English translation, *Remembrance of Things Past*, 1922-1931); Dorothy Richardson's twelve volume *Pilgrimage* (1915-1967); Joyce Cary's trilogy (1941-1944) about the artist Gulley Jimson (*Herself Surprised*, *To Be a Pilgrim*, and *The Horse's Mouth*); C. P. Snow's eleven volume *Brothers and Strangers* (1940-1970); Anthony Powell's twelve volume *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1951-1975); Anthony Burgess' trilogy, *The Long Day Wanes* (1956-1959); Doris Lessing's quintet, *Children of Violence* (1952-1969); Olivia Manning's *The Balkan Trilogy* (1960-1965) and *The Levant Trilogy* (1977-1980), which actually form a sextet; Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet* (1966-1975). Of these, only Proust's and Cary's were completed before the Alexandria Quartet. Cary's trilogy is straightforward linear narrative, and thus it has none of the innovation of Durrell's work regarding the treatment of time. Proust's great novel was a major influence on Durrell, in particular in its emphasis on the importance of memory. But to Proust's use of memory, Durrell adds a shifting point of view. Of the other sets, Powell's and Snow's include some disruption in time, and Scott's uses shifts in point of view and a complex chronology, but these sets were completed after the Alexandria Quartet. Thus Durrell was the first writer to employ the combination of disrupted time and shifting point of view within sets of novels.

It is also in these two techniques that one can see the movement from modernism to postmodernism in Durrell's novels. It is important, of course, to clarify what is meant by these terms, and that is no small task. In his essay "The Question of Postmodernism," Ihab Hassan provides a table which "hints at certain characteristics of postmodernism" (123). Hassan's table suggests, far more than he does in the rest of the essay, that there is a clear and distinct difference between modernism and postmodernism and even suggests some kind of continuity and linear development. Hassan is careful to denounce that view: "Modernism and postmodernism are not separated by an Iron Curtain or Chinese Wall, for history is a palimpsest, and culture is permeable to time past, time present, and time future"(120). Hassan's comment is particularly cogent in refence to Durrell's work because Durrell himself is fascinated by the relationship between time and the novel and has referred to the Quartet as a "palimpsest" (Alyn

66). In the Quintet Durrell has made another palimpsest but one that is even more permeable in its layers of time than is the Quartet, specifically because of the handling of the point of view.

Durrell is therefore experimenting with two fundamental aspects of narrative: time and point of view. How he handles these aspects throughout his career gives us the opportunity to see a development from modernism to postmodernism. The most relevant of Hassan's categories of modernism and postmodernism to the development in Durrell's works are the following: Form (conjunctive, closed) and Antiform (disjunctive, open); Presence and Absence; Metaphor and Metonymy; Readerly and Writerly; Metaphysics and Irony; Determinacy and Indeterminacy. The first part of each pair refers to modernism, the second to postmodernism. But it must be reiterated that Hassan offers these categories only as "hints."

Using Hassan's terms for modernism to examine Durrell's first two novels is a difficult task because both Pied Piper of Lovers and Panic Spring are the work of a young, unsure writer. In form these novels are conventional, third person narratives that make use of letters and journal entries. Pied Piper of Lovers is the story of Walsh Clifton, from his birth and early childhood in India to his education in an English public school to his Bohemian life as a young man in London. Panic Spring, in which Walsh Clifton is one of the main characters, is the story of a group of people on a privately owned Greek island. The main character, Christian Marlowe, is a former school teacher who wants to be a writer. Other characters include Francis, an artist; Rumanades, the owner of the island; and Gordon, Walsh's brother-in-law. These novels are of more interest thematically than formally in a study of Durrell's works, but they do exhibit some of Durrell's later formal concerns, such as the various ways of presenting the action. Neither one was artistically or commercially successful. In fact, the second novel, Panic Spring, was published under the pseudonym "Charles Norden" to dissociate it from the first novel.

It is not until The Black Book that Durrell begins to find his own voice, yet The Black Book is still somewhat derivative. The influence of Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and especially Henry Miller is strongly felt, as Durrell notes in the preface; nevertheless, in this novel the beginnings of an original formal product can be seen. In addition to this growing interest in form, the novel also contains a consolidation of the themes of the earlier works, themes to which Durrell returns and subsequently refines.

Durrell's next novel, The Dark Labyrinth, is something of an anomaly in the Durrell canon because of its allegorical nature. In form it is even more old fashioned than the first two novels, and it has none of the attempted innovation of The Black Book. However, The Dark Labyrinth is satisfying on a number of levels, not the least of which is the thematic, because Durrell is much more in control of his material than he is in The Black Book, and it cannot be ignored in an analysis of Durrell's works because it provides a clear statement of what he means by love, particularly in the context of knowledge.

With his next work, the Alexandria Quartet, Durrell has carved out a place for himself in the history of the English novel. Essentially the Quartet is the story of how the main character, Darley, becomes a writer. Darley narrates three volumes of the Quartet: Justine, Balthazar, and Clea. Mountolive has a third person narrator. Only Clea moves forward in time from the other three. Like The Black Book the Quartet uses a variety of narrative devices, such as journals, letters, and other novels. Balthazar can be seen as a corrected version of the reality presented in Justine. After completing a manuscript, Darley sends it to his friend Balthazar who brings it back: "papers now seared and starred by a massive interlinear of sentences, paragraphs and question-marks"(213). Balthazar presents one of the problems of the writer:

> "I have debated in myself very long about telling you some of the things I have put down here. At times it seemed a folly and an impertinence. After all, your concern--was it with us as real people or as 'characters'? I didn't know. I still don't. These pages may lose me your friendship without adding anything to the sum of your knowledge. You have been painting the city, touch

> by touch, upon a curved surface--was your object poetry or fact? If the latter, then there are things which you have a right to know." (213)

The question of what is real is a central concern of the Quartet. On his return to Alexandria in Clea, Darley asks, "Is poetry, then, more real than observed truth?"(672) when he sees the reaction of Melissa's child to her father, Nessim. She was "spellbound by the image rather than the reality"(672). Durrell shows the reality of the image, no matter how transitory that image is.

In the preface to the Quartet, Durrell indicates his overall plan for the the novels, one which defies closure, and which by doing so posits limitless realities:

> even if the group of books were extended indefinitely the result would never become roman fleuve; if, that is to say, the axis of the work has been properly laid down it could be possible to radiate from it in any direction without losing the strictness and congruity of its relation to 'a continuum'.

Although Durrell wishes to escape the constriction of the roman fleuve, it is impossible to escape the essential time-boundedness of the novel. David Lodge explains the dangers of ignoring this fact with reference to Finnegans Wake in his discussion of how modernist texts are often more metaphorical than metonymic:

> Joyce's Finnegans Wake (1939) indeed seems to fit the theory perfectly, since it is entirely based on the principle of similarity and substitution: structurally and thematically, in that every event is a re-enactment or a premonition of several other events in

> the history of the race, and verbally, in the use of a synthetic language based on the pun, which is a form of metaphor. But _Finnegans Wake_ is at the extremity of modern fiction; and indeed suggests that, because the novel is inherently a metonymic form, to force it _completely_ to the metaphoric pole entails its dissolution as a novel. What makes Finnegans Wake "unreadable" for many people is actually not the expression of multiple similarities through the pun, but the lack of logical or narrative continuity in the combination of the puns. ("The Language of Modernist Fiction" 484)

Thus, although a novelist can experiment with narrative form, he must be careful not to violate the essential nature of the novel. In this regard Durrell manages artfully to combine narrative experimentation with a strong commitment to the telling of the story. In effect, Durrell develops, to use E.M. Forster's words, "the art of telling."[2]

After the success of the Quartet, Durrell's next two novels, _Tunc_ and _Nunquam_, proved to be something of a regression in form. Reed Way Dasenbrock says that the lack of enthusiasm for these novels results from their shift away from the modernist modes of the Quartet:

> They not only fail to conform to these modernist modes within which _The Alexandria Quartet_ can be placed; they deliberately confront, mock, and subvert them. _The Revolt of Aphrodite_ is thematically, stylistically, and formally a deliberate and searching interrogation of the values advanced by the _Quartet_. In the process, Durrell creates a work of fiction that, to my mind, is considerably more interesting than the _Quartet_. But in so radically disrupting the tacit compliance with

> accepted taste that had been behind the success of the Quartet, Durrell also lost much of his audience, both popular and academic. ("Lawrence Durrell and the Modes of Modernism" 521-2)

Dasenbrock is alone in his view that The Revolt of Aphrodite is more interesting than the Quartet, but his view that there is a radical shift between the two is correct. The simplest way to explain this shift, I think, is to say that The Revolt of Aphrodite is science fiction, a genre that is not to everyone's taste.

In these novels a vast firm controls not only many interests but also many people. The main character, Felix Charlock, is an inventor whose inventions are taken over by the firm for its own ends. The most important thing that Charlock invents is a memory machine called Abel. With the help of this machine, the firm attempts to recreate human life. I think these two novels, like The Dark Labyrinth, are of limited interest formally, but once again they cannot be ignored because they provide insight to Durrell's major theme of knowledge. They also provide another thematic link between the Quartet and the Quintet in that reality is manipulated in them. This manipulation of reality is on two levels: creating people in a concrete sense through the recreation of memory and creating people in an abstract sense--the creation of characters, in fact. The creation of fiction is an undercurrent in the two novels. They take the problem of creation further than is done in the Quartet. Darley, in the Quartet, is concerned with becoming a writer; Charlock, in Tunc and Nunquam is concerned with creating a human being through the agency of memory. The connection between memory and reality is made clear on the first page of Nunquam: waking up, Charlock "tries to establish himself in the so-called reality which depends, like a poor relation, on memory" (11). The Quintet goes further than either the Quartet or The Revolt of Aphrodite: in it the mixing of the so-called reality and the so-called fictional is brought to fruition.

In the Avignon Quintet, Durrell takes up many of the thematic and formal concerns of his earlier works, especially of his Quartet, and extends them, going beyond the limits reached by any of the earlier works. Thematically, there may not appear to be a great development in material, but one can see that there is, in fact, a development, one reflected by the increasing difficulty the reader has in knowing what is taking place and in crediting it once it is discerned. The problem of knowledge is the subject and the method.

The difficulty of pinning down the reality in the Quintet is much greater than it is in the Quartet, and this difficulty stems from the fact that the types of reality presented in the Quartet and Quintet are vastly different. The Quartet is very much grounded in the phenomenal world; the Quintet must be taken as an exploration of the ontological world. One of Darley's problems in the Quartet is to amass enough information to know what has taken place; for example, he believes at first that Justine loves him, but as he gains more knowledge, he discovers that he was merely being used by her to cover up her feelings for Pursewarden. Like Darley, the reader sifts through each new bit of information to arrive at the truth of what has happened.

In the Quintet, this sifting of information does not work, nor is it what is required to come to grips with the work. Instead one must reevaluate a possibly new method of creativity in addition to the finished product. The Quartet and the Quintet are very much alike: both are concerned with creativity. But the method is different. In the Quartet we are aware of Darley's problems in trying to figure out what actually happened and what the significance of various actions is. In the Quintet, the problem shifts to the reader. By the end of the Quintet, we realise that one of the main characters, Blanford, a writer, has created a fictional writer named Sutcliffe who has actually written the first volume of the Quintet and who collaborates on the others. This development is a significant change from the type of narrative stances in the Quartet and as such may give new meaning to the word "novel." At the least the narrative method of the Quintet causes us to recall Hassan's distinction between modern and postmodern according to "Presence and Absence." In Sebastian Blanford tells Sutcliffe: "Your version of our book gives the presence of events, mine the absence" (143). In breaking this ground Durrell is doing what Bakhtin says is the job of the novelist. For, according to Michael Holquist, "'novel' is the name Bakhtin gives to whatever force is at work within a given literary system to reveal the limits, the artificial constraints of that system" (Bakhtin, xxxi). In experimenting with and pushing out to the limits in his novels, Durrell has illustrated the major narrative development in this century: from modernism to postmodernism.

An examination of the novels of Lawrence Durrell necessitates an understanding of the prevailing thematic and formal concerns of novelists in this century. Because Durrell's novels mirror the development in the novel in this century, the relative critical neglect of his works is difficult to comprehend. At the present time, Durrell's achievements as a novelist have not been adequately recognized or appreciated. I hope that this study will help to change that situation.

Chapter One

The Apprenticeship Novels

Examining the early works of a writer can be rewarding in two ways: one can appreciate the works for themselves, and one can appreciate the works as a basis for the greater artistic achievements to come. This is definitely the case with Durrell's early works, and so I will begin in this chapter by looking at Durrell's first four novels in terms of their thematic significance and their formal narrative structure.

Pied Piper of Lovers, Durrell's first novel, was published in 1935 when the author was 23 years old. His second, *Panic Spring*, was published in 1937, and his third, *The Black Book*, in 1938. There is a gap of nine years until the publication of his fourth, *The Dark Labyrinth* and another of ten years until the publication of *Justine*. The proximity of and similarities among the first three novels make it natural to discuss them in one chapter. *The Dark Labyrinth* does not fit in easily with the first three novels, nor with any other of Durrell's novels because of its allegorical nature. However, I think it belongs in a discussion of Durrell's works of apprenticeship, and as such it is included in this first chapter.

Alan G. Thomas, Durrell's friend and the editor of *Spirit of Place*, remarks that "much of Lawrence Durrell's early life is reflected in his first novel" and that it is "a somewhat 'prentice' effort with no great intimation of what was to come" (Spirit of Place 164). Durrell himself admits that the novel is autobiographical[3] and also dismisses it along with Panic Spring as "hardly worth investigation" (Young 67). As apprentice efforts, though, Pied Piper of Lovers and Panic Spring introduce some of Durrell's prevailing interests.

Ray Morrison, one of the few commentators on the first novel, remarks, "This novel with its shifting and awkward handling of narrative perspectives and techniques was a somewhat clumsy attempt to escape traditional narrative form or what [Durrell] later called plodding along the dotted line" ("Time . . . " 1). In addition to seeing this novel as the first attempt of Durrell to deal with formal concerns which become more important in subsequent novels, Morrison sees the introduction of a prevailing theme: "Already present for Durrell is a central issue that is to dominate much of his major writing: love" ("Time . . . " 4).

In Panic Spring, says Morrison, "Durrell has so avoided traditional narrative structure that the novel is only saved from formlessness by Mavrodaphne itself, its weather, and the tenuous motif of the spiritual journey" ("Time . . . " 13). This experiment with form teaches Durrell a lesson according to Morrison: "Thereafter, Durrell either avoids or disguises artfully such looseness in narration and form" ("Time . . ." 13). Morrison also points out that in addition to formal development, this novel shows another of Durrell's thematic interests: "time and its relationship to ego" ("Time . . ."13).

Like Ray Morrison, James A. Brigham also sees value in the first two novels: "they will repay the reader interested in Durrell with glimpses of themes and character types that would be prominent features of _The Dark Labyrinth_ (1947) and _The Alexandria Quartet_ (1957-1960)" ("An Unacknowledged Trilogy" 3). Brigham goes on to say that the first three novels are "complementary novels, panels of a tryptych in which the setting changes but which are linked by small structural parallels and the reappearance of characters, and more importantly, by textual echoes . . . "(3). If Brigham is correct, then not only are the early works introductions to Durrell's themes and to his formal concerns within individual novels, but they are also an introduction to his formal concerns within groups of novels.

Critics are divided on the value of the two first novels. In his book on the Quartet, Alan Friedman says they "were neither financially nor artistically successful, although the latter is interesting for its languorous and Mediterranean exoticism in the manner of _South Wind_" (3). An extremely negative view is that of G.S. Fraser who says in his study of Durrell's works, "I must admit I have not been able to read either of these books all the way through" (10). John Weigel indicates the main problem in trying to discuss the first novel: it's simply unavailable through the usual channels. (I am greatly indebted to James Brigham who has lent me his photocopy of the publisher's copy.) Weigel believes that *Panic Spring* "is worth discussion, for it is the real *beginning*" (41). He places it "in the tradition of Douglas' *South Wind*" (41). Weigel's brief discussion of the novel is marred somewhat by his misspelling of "Rumanades" and his misnaming of the main character who is not "Christopher" but "Christian" Marlowe.

With the exception of the work done by Morrison and Brigham, the critical attention to Durrell's first two novels has been scant and sometimes sloppy, and no one has yet looked at the whole of Durrell's *oeuvre*. Both Brigham and Morrison did their studies before the publication of the Quintet, and I believe that that event makes a revaluation of all Durrell's work necessary. Therefore I will go back to the early works, perhaps retracing at times the path of previous criticism but attempting to look at these works from the perspective of one who also has the Quintet to consider.

Durrell's third novel, *The Black Book*, is considered by the author and most critics to be his first important work although no one is as effusive as T. S. Eliot, Durrell's editor at Faber and Faber, who called it "the first piece of work by a new English writer to give me any hope for the future of prose fiction."[4] Eliot went on to say, "The Black Book is not a scrap-book, but a carefully executed whole. There is nothing of the second-hand literary about the material; but what is most unusual is the structure which the author has made of it."[5] In a 1959 preface to The Black Book, Durrell reiterates less enthusiastically these same thoughts:

> . . . I can't help being attached to it because in the writing of it I first heard the sound of my own voice, lame and halting perhaps, but nevertheless my very own. . . . The Black Book was truly an agon for me, a savage battle conducted in the interests of self-discovery. It built itself out of a long period of despair and frustration during which I knew that my work, though well-contrived, was really derivative. It seemed to me that I would never really discover myself, my private voice and vision. (9)

Durrell's comments on the novel are more apt than Eliot's and coincide with the comments of some critics. For example, John Weigel says, "Had Durrell not written the Quartet, The Black Book might have remained obscure" (44). The Black Book is more interesting as a forerunner to the Quartet than it is as an individual book. As Alan Friedman says in his book on the Quartet:

> Durrell's writing in The Black Book--the interweaving of naturalistic and poetic levels of narration, the experimental richness of language and style--anticipates that of the Quartet, for he attempts to break down language into something more fluid and less structured, a medium better able to transmit the sense of a timeless present embodying all. (5)

Although I disagree that Durrell is looking for something less structured, I do agree with Friedman that the experimentation of The Black Book helps Durrell to develop the form of the Quartet. Durrell himself said, "I think The Black Book, in which I struck oil for the first time, might suggest a confused sort of sketch for the present 'Alexandria Quartet'" (Young 67). Therefore, like the first two novels, the third is still the work of an apprentice.

Durrell's next novel, The Dark Labyrinth, is something of an anomaly in the Durrell canon because of its allegorical nature. It differs from the first three in this respect and in that it does not have their recurring characters. However the themes of The Dark Labyrinth are very much connected to the rest of Durrell's work, and in some ways, the expression of the theme of love is one of the most explicit of all Durrell's work. Therefore, The Dark Labyrinth cannot be ignored in a study of Durrell's novels, and it should be placed with other apprentice works in that, once again, Durrell is experimenting with a form. In a letter to Henry Miller, Durrell describes the novel as a

> queer cosmological tale about seven modern European tourists who get lost in the labyrinth in Crete where the minotaur has begun to make a comeback. It is really an extended morality, but written artlessly in the style of a detective story. Guilt, Superstition, The Good Life, all appear as ordinary people; a soldier on leave, a medium, an elderly married couple (Trueman), a

> young unfledged pair, a missionary. I have deliberately chosen that most exasperating of forms, the situation novel, in which to write it. (A Private Correspondence 201)

I believe Durrell was more successful with The Dark Labyrinth than he gives himself credit for, but his decision to turn to other forms indicates that he thought he had done what he could with this particular form.

Part One: Pied Piper of Lovers

Because of the difficulty in obtaining this novel, I will provide a more detailed plot summary than I do for the other works. The novel is divided into three books with a prologue and an epilogue. The prologue describes the birth in India of the main character, Walsh Clifton, the son of an English engineer, John Clifton, and an unnamed Indian woman, who dies after giving birth to him. The prologue ends with a description of the coffin that Krisnati, the carpenter, is building for Walsh's mother. Book One opens when Walsh is six years old and he and his father are moving to Kurseong in the north of India where John Clifton is to work on the railway. Walsh lives an unsupervised and uneducated life until the Jesuits offer him instruction. Order is introduced with the arrival of Walsh's Aunt Brenda about halfway through Book One. Near the end of Book One, the peace is broken when Dulcie Clifton, Walsh's grandmother and a religious fanatic, comes to stay. Dulcie's arrival coincides with an outbreak of cholera. Walsh's friend, Patrick Keen, falls victim to the disease and dies. Book One ends with Walsh dreaming of death and a coffin.

Book Two begins with Walsh and Brenda's arrival in England. Walsh is about fourteen years old and is being sent off to a public school where initially he is misunderstood and thrashed. Later he is respected for his athletic abilities although by then Walsh is more interested in intellectual pursuits than sports. Two important events take place in this book. First of all, while on holiday with Brenda, Walsh meets a young woman named Ruth and falls in love with her. He spends only a few hours in her company, though, as she is leaving the country the next day. The second important event occurs about three years later. It is the death of Walsh's father, a death that Walsh dreams about before he learns of it. Following his father's death, he leaves school and goes to live in London.

At the beginning of Book Three, Walsh is looking for a place to live, one he can afford on his three pounds a week legacy. His roommate at school has given him the name of a friend in London who may be able to help him, and Walsh goes to see him. Robin and his friends, Isobel and Russell, do help him and become his new friends. They are all poor and live like bohemians. Walsh's financial problems are finally resolved when he discovers he can make money by selling songs. His emotional void is filled when he runs into Ruth at the British Museum, and they begin a life together. Unfortunately Ruth is dying, news that Walsh hears through a strange twist of fate from a retired doctor named Maclean who is Ruth's friend and who also happens to be the doctor who delivered Walsh.

The Epilogue is a letter to Turnbull, his school friend. It describes Walsh and Ruth's life in the country, a peaceful life in which they share the burden of earning a living: Walsh writes the music and Ruth writes the lyrics. The possibility of Ruth's imminent death is ever present, and Walsh even dreams about it.

Essentially *Pied Piper of Lovers* is about the maturation of Walsh Clifton, a maturation that depends on his recognition of the importance of love and his ability to find love, for however short a time, with Ruth. The theme of the novel is that love is the most effective means to self-knowledge, which leads to wholeness and happiness. Two other common means of gaining knowledge are explored and discarded: religion and formal education.

As a child Walsh has limited contact with religion. Although he is tutored by Father Calhoun, one of the Jesuits who live in the nearby monastery, Brenda makes it clear that the education must be limited to secular matters. Brenda's Protestant dislike of Catholicism is conventional, but the way the difference between her and Father Calhoun is illustrated is not. Brenda is associated with a kind of life-giving laughter which Walsh and his father recognize upon her arrival. Brenda's laughter brings the small family together and offers the opportunity for feelings that John and Walsh Clifton seldom or never feel. Laughter is seen as the key to unity, a way to bring people together:

> For Clifton there was a peculiar sense of intimacy that underlay such pealing, profitless laughter, as if she were deliberately setting herself to win back the trust and confidence that years of separation must have dissipated: setting herself to rediscover him and soften the shyness of meeting again, and to make easier those confidences which they would have to give each other. (96)

Laughter is an outward sign of intimacy and love. The ability to share laughter indicates the ability to love. Both laughter and love involve shared feelings of trust.

Just as John is touched by Brenda's laughter, so is his son. Sitting on his bed listening to the laughter of the adults, Walsh thinks about the new experience his aunt has brought him: "Laughter! The word held the answer to the truth he was about to discover. He had never really laughed before. Never in the same whole-hearted way. Never like that. . . . Why had he never laughed before?" (97). Walsh does not articulate the changed perspective he has; instead it is seen through his father. "He was aware of her presence near him as the existence of a generous and limitless fund of security from which he could draw at will" (98). The absence of meaningful human contact has profoundly affected both John and Walsh. John is mourning the loss of Walsh's mother while Walsh does not even have a loss to mourn. With Brenda present, both John and Walsh start to be less separate.

It is precisely Brenda's capacity for life, as symbolised by her ability to laugh, that the priest abhors. "[Father Calhoun] disliked Brenda on sight. In the arrogant ease of her movements, the unflinching frankness of her hard blue eyes, he perceived the movement of a vitality that was repellent to him" (116). Brenda's choice to find solace in contact with people rather than in a remote deity naturally conflicts with the Jesuit's choice to live in a monastery separated from humanity.

The other example of a religious person in the novel is Dulcie Clifton, a fanatic whose religious practices upset everyone and appear to serve no useful purpose. Dulcie's arrival is in direct counterpoint to Brenda's. Brenda arrives with a book called "With the Dervishes in Africa" (95) for Walsh, his first book, a watch for John, and a bottle of Tawny Port for all of them. She also brings the gift of order by setting straight the household accounts and making the servants do their jobs properly and honestly. In addition, Brenda brings another very important gift: music. She arranges to get a piano and then borrows music. Each night Brenda, Walsh, and John have a sing-song. Eventually Walsh wants to learn how to play and shows the first glimmers of musical creativity.

In direct contrast to the positive effect of Brenda's arrival is that of Dulcie. As partially filtered through

Walsh's consciousness:

> With summer came Grandmamma, and with Grandmamma came the plague; both calamities, coming as they did, exactly at the same time, became indissolubly linked together in the boy's mind as a double-headed evil; a two-fold catastrophe which was, inescapably, one. (133)

Just as the plague kills off people, Dulcie kills off the pleasant life the three have been enjoying. She brings with her religious tracts and reproductions of Holman Hunt. She delays meals until the food is cold with her lengthy prayers giving thanks. She replaces the pleasant sing-songs with solitary recitals of "sacred music" (134). Lacking compromise and compassion, Dulcie effectively ruins the warmth generated by Brenda. This lack of compromise is described in ironic terms: "Her refusal directly to adapt herself to anyone or anything amounted to an almost demonic talent . . . "(134). Clearly, Dulcie's religious fervour is destructive and divisive, results that are in direct contrast to the unifying effect of Brenda's laughter. Religion in this novel is presented as offering little but repression and destruction.

Another commonly accepted means of gaining knowledge--formal education--is seen in a similar fashion. In an effort to bring Walsh up as a young Englishman, John finally succumbs to the pressure exerted on him by Brenda and agrees to send Walsh to school in England. Both adults believe they are doing the right thing, but ironically, England destroys not only the relationship between Walsh and Brenda but also Brenda herself. She is cut off from anyone she cares about: John is in Kurseong, and Walsh is in public school. She ends up living a lonely life caring for Dulcie who has lost her mind. All the laughter has gone out of Brenda. The laughter nearly goes out of Walsh, too, because of the brutality of the public school. Walsh's very being is threatened by the molding process. We are told:

> One is not treated as a rational creature ~~a~~t fourteen. One does not, as a generation of sexless fathers and high-school teachers have repeatedly reminded us, know one's own wants. I have said that he was a child of space, and that is as true an approximation of his qualities as words can give; lustiness, an aptitude for sheer sensual appreciation, a secret self-immolating zest for raw life--all of these were threatened.
>
> Of course he did not realize. All the greater tragedies of life happen within us--in our unconscious minds. He could not be expected to realize. Yet, I suppose some queer streak in him did make him resist: some cell in him must have been warned against the new enemy. Perhaps that weak caving-in before the hosts of Philistia was only a feint, a deception which would give him time to measure his own strength, and gauge that of his masters and pastors. (171-2)

The juxtaposition of "masters" and "pastors" in this context shows that the institutions of school and church need to be defied in order to preserve the individual.

It is important to note that once again Durrell uses laughter as a touchstone to show what cripples and what does not. Walsh's first crime at school is to be funny, and for that he is beaten. A few years later when he is seventeen, Walsh is moved into a room with Turnbull, with whom he becomes friends. Both young men are serious, but Turnbull is able to see the humour in the two of them:

> it was Turnbull who supplied the balance, the sensible balance of laughter to the proceedings. He had a quick and calculating brain which was never slow to discover to him the idiocy, the humour of their condition. He would never tire of saying: "So long as you realize, my clever little Clifton, that we are frightfully funny groping about the cracked altar-pieces of knowledge, then you will be all right." (226)

In Turnbull Walsh has an excellent foil for his intellectual hunger. The playing-off of the two minds is even done on paper. Walsh keeps a notebook (a black one) in which he writes down ideas. This notebook cannot help but remind one of The Black Book of which it is a brief forerunner. The notebook also foreshadows Balthazar because just as the character Balthazar provides Darley with an interlinear so does Turnbull provide Walsh with one in the black notebook.

The notebook and his friendship with Turnbull are two of the few positive aspects of his years at school. In the notebook and through his contact with Turnbull, Walsh makes some important discoveries about himself and the world. His last entry in the book is his most important:

> All philosophy seems to lead me towards a perfect spiritual detachment--a divorce from the world.

> *and therefore towards sterility and deadness. Let me be content to say: I am, and content to "be" as fully as possible*.
>
> Under this last entry in the book he scrawled, illegibly, so that Turnbull might not read it, *No shame*. (233-4)

Clearly Walsh does not want to separate himself from the world; he wants to avoid "sterility and deadness" and attempts to do that by making contact with people. The friends that he makes in London--Robin, Russell, and Isobel--are ultimately rejected because they are victims of the sterility and deadness that Walsh desperately wants to avoid. All three are students, and the academic world is seen by Walsh as being divorced from life. They are different from Turnbull, who tells Walsh: "You must see and know and experience. You must" (264). Turnbull's advice to Walsh is reminiscent of Strether's advice to Bilham in *The Ambassadors*. Strether tells Bilham to live, to participate in life not merely to observe it.

Walsh's friends diligently study the accumulation of knowledge in the Reading Room. But this is not the kind of life that Walsh wants, nor is it the kind of life that Turnbull advocates for him. It is important to keep in mind that Turnbull has told Walsh to remember that they "are frightfully funny groping about the cracked altar-pieces of knowledge" (226). Turnbull's choice of words brings together academe and religion, and both are seen pejoratively with the use of the word "cracked."

Walsh expresses his discontent with his life one night after a party. He leaves the party telling Isobel, "'It's just an episode . . . All this life. It's an episode. I'm going on to something else. I can't find any fresh life here among this bunch of thumb-sucking apes'" (329). Walsh's reference to "thumb-sucking apes" is an allusion to Wyndham Lewis's _The Apes of God_ (1930), thereby showing Walsh's dislike of English complacency and of the insularity of the society he lives in. Walsh's dislike becomes more specific when he criticises Isobel later that night.

> "Damn it!" he said furiously, angered by her insistence, "will you never be able to do a thing without questioning its causes? Have you never wanted to do a thing for its own sake? Damn you, Isobel, that's what I mean. . . . Not only you, Russell, Robin, everyone. . . . You won't accept life for what it is--you put up hundreds of piffling little barriers against it, against people, against yourselves. You bunch of deluded incompetents. You're afraid, everyone of you. . . . Scared pink----" [ellipses in text] (332-3)

Walsh sees life as a series of contacts, and he criticises his friends for trying to avoid these contacts. Although he doesn't say directly at this point what it is they are afraid of, it is apparent from an earlier incident that the object of fear is feeling.

When Walsh first meets Isobel, Robin, and Russell, he plays the guitar and sings a song for them. The ballad with its refrain of "_Quia amore langueo_"[6] has a strong effect on all four. When Walsh sings the refrain, "his soul [goes] sick in him and his throat contract[s] sharply under the wounding pain of them" (297). Robin looks "as though the impact of the words angered him" (297) while Russell smokes and twists his hands. Isobel weeps and finally runs out of the room saying, "I hate us [and] I hate our miserable little passions . . . " (298). Unlike his friends Walsh is willing to feel, even when the feeling is painful. Isobel's physical departure mirrors her emotional detachment from the world, a detachment that Walsh finally learns is counter to life. Later when he sells a song based on this poem, he is annoyed that the song has been changed and its ability to move listeners is lost. Walsh thinks, "Why were people so fearful of being moved?" (345). The fear of being moved appears to be similar to the desire of scholars to remove themselves from life. After Walsh sells his song, he goes to the British Museum and reflects on knowledge.

What Walsh thinks shows a clear distinction between scholarly books and the books of poets:

> The crackle of stiff paper wound up to the ceiling--a sigh of plaint from the hundred crabbed scholars condemned to this everlasting inferno of fruitless knowledge.
>
> Old women, old men, with here and there a young face, all bent over books, all busy spelling out forgotten sentences. He wondered what a savage would have thought of this, this huge whispering activity about the search for knowledge--always more knowledge. Smilingly he estimated the expense of spirit in the accumulation of useless lore; he smiled upon this gathering of avid scholars around the jam-pot of

> knowledge.
>
> Yet he remembered that they had been here too, were still here among the others, the poets, the lovers, the artists. They had handled the books he handled. But they had taken what knowledge they had to give--and left. There still remained these multitudes of old men, of gaunt women, shuffling in their carpet-slippers, mumbling over the dry husks of history, ceaselessly editing and annotating, spelling out the black symbols daubed upon a hundred pieces of white paper. How far were they from wisdom? How far from life? (346-7)

The scholars are seen as outside of life, as being dried up and fruitless. Poets, lovers, and artists are all involved with life. Walsh thinks their endeavours are more worthwhile than those of the "crabbed scholars" who are trapped inside the library, unable to go outside and participate in life by participating in some kind of creative activity. The allusion to Shakespeare's sonnet that begins "Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame//Is lust in action . . . " shows that Walsh is comparing "the accumulation of useless lore" or scholarship to lust, which in this sonnet is seen as a waste, although often an unavoidable one. The sonnet points out that lust is "A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;//Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.//All this the world well knows; yet none knows well//To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell" (11-14). Both lust and scholarship are empty, and yet as Shakespeare so forcefully shows, man is often driven to what he knows is a waste of time.

Ironically it is in the British Museum that Walsh finds Ruth and with her a kind of life-giving love. Their initial contact years before provides Walsh with the motto "No shame" and his first feelings of love. With Ruth, and to some extent with her brother, Gordon, Walsh feels he belongs because they accept him and recognize that he is not, in Gordon's words, "a damned Englander yet" (217). The ability to love and not feel shame is mixed up with the ability to deflect or reject the force of indoctrination by a stifling society. When Gordon passes on the motto from Ruth to Walsh, he tries to explain his sister's point of view: "She was very proud of it and said it should be our motto, since we were savage people and much nearer to the earth than most. She was full of a theory of direct sensory impacts . . . "(215-6). Gordon goes on to say, "I expect she thought you were very like us . . . you've got some of the gifts of naturalness . . . sort of integrity" (217). It is this naturalness, this acceptance of senses, that brings Walsh and Ruth together and separates Walsh from his three friends in London, who he thinks resist feeling.

Durrell once again uses the motif of laughter to show the type of people Ruth and Gordon are. Just as Walsh can laugh with Brenda, so can he with Ruth and Gordon. When he first meets them, they share the experience of laughter, and after the years of separation, Walsh and Ruth share a cathartic laughter: "Kneeling upright, they began to laugh, silently, hysterically, clutching each other, and each gust of laughter seemed to be the gathering of newer, purer breath, for the rejuvenation of their tired bodies" (353). Once reunited with Ruth, Walsh removes himself from his friends and from London and goes with Ruth to the country to live out her remaining days together.

Clearly, love is important to this novel. Walsh has to learn the importance of love--a love that includes a shared sense of the importance of feeling--and its role in providing him with a reason for existence. Therefore, his relationship with Ruth is extremely important even though it comprises a small part of the novel and even though it is obvious that his life with Ruth will be short. Ruth and Turnbull are the only people Walsh feels any lasting feeling for: his relationship with his father is quite unsatisfactory; his relationship with Brenda has promise until they move to England, but once there Walsh and Brenda drift apart; his contact with his London friends is broken as soon as he meets Ruth again. He isolates himself with Ruth in the countryside, making contact only with Turnbull through a letter. The people that Walsh chooses to make contact with at the end of the novel are the those he feels comfortable with because of their shared views of life.

Walsh attempts to lay out his reasons for going to the countryside in his letter to Turnbull at the end of the novel. In trying to describe to Turnbull his feelings, he also touches on what is for Durrell a central concern: the form of expression. Walsh writes:

> I could post you a screed in which I discovered to you many strange things, blood-rhythms, pulses, and all the electrical activities that charge hip and loin, shoulder, thigh and finger. But then you know and I know the eternal quibble with words. Failing to express to others what you have expressed to yourself. I think sculpture is the medium in which to express. Space against Time curves and stresses, structures and dimensions. How in hell can I express the *volume* of things by daubing ink on paper? In future I'll send you deformed lumps of clay, each representing a letter. So abstract and so satisfying. Yet I experiment with subtlety and real pleasure in poetry. (369)

It is important that it is Turnbull to whom Walsh writes. The letter picks up some of the concerns that the two had when they were both at school, in particular the difficulty of expressing the tangibility of feeling in something as abstract as words. Walsh's suggestion that sculpture is the appropriate medium for such an endeavour is a clever school-boyish approach to the problem of expression. It's notable that he says he is experimenting "with subtlety and real pleasure in poetry" (369). Ultimately Walsh finds his expression in words, as does Durrell.

Walsh is also expressing what he knows to Turnbull through the medium of words: he is trying to transmit his newly found knowledge to his friend. Although Walsh's happiness is tempered by the fact that he knows Ruth will die, it is the knowledge he has gained through the experience that makes it possible for him to carry on. He tells Turnbull that he has not found any philosphy or system of belief. What he has discovered is that he is mortal: "I know something, though, that's very startling--absolute mental dynamite. That is: 'I am, and quite soon I will not be.' Isn't that enough?" (373). This mortality leads him to what he calls "the doctrine of a perfect selfishness" (373). He explains it thus: "My sensibility is the only laboratory in which work is carried out that interests me at all" (373). The sensibility that Walsh has discovered is love: he has become the pied piper of lovers, those who are devoted to sensibility. His attempt to pass his knowledge on to Turnbull shows his taking up of the position of leader. In effect the student has surpassed the teacher. The theory that Turnbull passes to Walsh is passed back in the concrete experience that Walsh tries to articulate for his friend.

In addition to introducing Durrell's thematic concerns, Pied Piper of Lovers also shows his interest in narrative. The plot is given in chronological order by a third person narrator although the narrative is usually filtered through the consciousness of Walsh. Occasionally it is filtered through other characters, most notably John Clifton and Brenda. And sometimes the narrator comments directly on the actions or characters. Other means of presentation such as letters and notebook entries are used. Free indirect speech is present as is a certain amount of stream of consciousness.

Durrell appears to be willing to try any narrative technique in this novel, and the result, as Morrison points out, is "clumsy" ("Time . . . " 1). The awkwardness is created, I believe, by the sense that experimentation is being done for the sake of experimentation, not for any practical or artistic purpose. The narration and what is narrated--the discourse and the story, to use Seymour Chatman's terms--do not fit together. The problem lies with the narrator, and it is not the problem of unreliability in the Jamesian sense. James's narrators may be flawed centres of consciousness in that their perceptions are at odds with what the reader understands to be the perceptions of the author, but Durrell's narrator in _Pied Piper of Lovers_ is flawed in that he doesn't have control of his material or his position. There is no clear centre of consciousness, but the novel makes the reader expect one.

Unlike, for example, Joyce's _Ulysses_, which is obviously a narrative experiment, _Pied Piper of Lovers_ has instances of experimentation set against a conventional third person narrative. The narrative shifts in the novel conflict with the sense of an authoritative narrative voice. One way in which the reader's expectations of an authoritative narrative voice are set up is through the use of intrusions. Eighteenth and nineteenth century novelists commonly use this technique, but it does not work very well when there is no clearly defined narrative voice or narrative stance. The occasional narrative intrusion posits a definite narrator, a definite teller of the tale.

At several points in the novel, the narrator comments directly on the action. The more extended of these passages can be seen as interpolations of the author, Lawrence Durrell himself, because of the nature of the comments. The passages have to do with the brutality of the English public school and the difficulty encountered by those who come "home" to England. For example:

> It is very nearly impossible to assess the blame, to attribute it to one person or to another; indeed it is doubtful whether such a thing as blame exists in these matters, whatever the jealous fictions of the novelist, whatever the tirades, the denunciations. Is it possible to refrain from coercing a child? Then why not mass coercion? Why not a type? In an irrational world, dependent mostly on standards which do not exist, it seems logical that we spend our lives upholding, justifying them: humanity must have something to do: must prime itself with the wine of these happy illusions as a condemned man about to mount the scaffold, since its own peering, inquisitive, spectacled mind is for ever forced to pry among mysteries, seeking it knows not what, finding a meagre handful of nothing, and being for ever constrained to remember the awful undiscovered space about itself. . . . (167-8)

Durrell is already attacking in this passage what he calls in The Black Book "the English Death." However in this passage as in, for example, the one in which a plea is made for help for the repatriated (189), the emotional intensity has been taken away from the characters and passed to the author through the guise of a third person omniscient narrator.

The essential problem in this novel is one which Durrell addresses over and over throughout his novels: how does the writer make known what it is he wants to say. Or, in other words, how is knowledge transmitted? Durrell constantly searches in his novels for an appropriate narrative stance for the transmission of his material: he is concerned not only with knowledge as a result but also with how knowledge is gained. And this overriding interest affects how the story is told in his various novels.

The narration in Pied Piper of Lovers drifts, creating a tension and confusion. It is not clear who is in control or where the centre of knowledge is. Another way to put it is that there is a mixture of telling and showing, diegesis and mimesis. Both are present in a novel as F. K. Stanzel in A Theory of Narrative says:

> The novel is not a homogeneous genre but a mixture of diegetic-narrative and mimetic-dramatic parts. In the narrative parts, however, a gradual progression from the pronounced diegetic-narrative to the mimetic-dramatic can be noted. Free indirect style, indirect speech, speech report and largely dramatic scene are more closely related to the mimetic-dramatic than are a narrator's very compressed report of action and authorial commentary. The various forms by which

> consciousness may be rendered assume a special position, because they disregard the boundary postulated here. Authorial thought report, the rendering of thought in a form analogous to indirect speech, as well as free indirect style are among the narrative forms, but interior monologue can also be regarded as a mimetic-dramatic form under certain conditions. (66)

The problem is not that *Pied Piper of Lovers* contains these various techniques. The problem is that they conflict in the way they are used. A few examples will illustrate the problem.

The first example is from the Prologue. John Clifton has gone to call the servants to bring hot water for the delivery of the child:

> Strangely comforting he found the murmur of voices and the shining black faces grouped in the redness. In the lull of the wind that snatched at his clothing he heard the deep answering voice of a servant. The rain swished about his boots.
>
> *Question: uneven monotone, plaintive upon the wind.*
>
> *Answer: crisp, final and authoritative.*
>
> The procession of figures across the door-mouth was like the execution scene from *Hassan*. (11)

The first three sentences are the narrator's as is the last, but it is unclear whose words the intervening ones are. The narrator does not use this kind of syntax, nor does John Clifton. The lines in question are more lyrical than they are narrative, or more mimetic-dramatic than diegetic-narrative, but because there is no clue about whose words they are, the mimetic-dramatic form loses its usefulness.

The narrator in this novel does not have a consistent point of view; that is, he does not speak from the same position of knowledge, thereby creating confusion. Sometimes he knows what is going on in a character's mind, and sometimes he does not. This is different from a narrator's decision not to reveal what is being thought, as, for example, in Hemingway's story "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber": at the crucial moment--the shooting of Francis--the narrator chooses not to tell the reader what Mrs. Macomber is thinking, thereby leaving the reader to decide whether or not she killed her husband intentionally. Hemingway's narrator is consistent, though, in that he never sees into the mind of Mrs. Macomber. In contrast, Durrell's narrator is inconsistent in his ability to see into the minds of the characters.

Another example of this inconsistency occurs at the end of the prologue when the narrator is describing the building of Walsh's mother's coffin. In one paragraph the narrator knows what Krisnati, the carpenter, is thinking and in the next he doesn't. The reader is told:

> Where the moralist and the philosopher would have paused to speculate on mortality, mutability, and the survival after bodily death, Krisnati, the carpenter, merely paused to contemplate a work which he would have enjoyed completing had the materials been more fitting and the time at his disposal more lengthy; where the monk or the mystic would have paused and pondered sadly on this symbolical illustration of an already

> formulated ideology, the carpenter merely paused to anticipate the punishment for faulty workmanship. It would be useless to explain that the fault was not his. Clifton sahib would smack him hard over the back of the neck! It had happened several times before. (34)

In this paragraph the narrator knows what Krisnati is thinking. The last three sentences are even filtered through the carpenter's consciousness, giving the reader a sense of not only what he thinks but how he would express his thoughts. But in the next paragraph the narrator is unsure:

> Yet, perhaps I wrong him, for on one side of the coffin he had not planed the wood smooth, had not obliterated the red, stamped capital letters that herded unsteadily together and displayed their meaning for all to see. Perhaps he had divined the need for an epitaph, some parting tribute to hollow flesh, now empty of life-force: perhaps in his fuddled old mind, he remembered the inscribed tombstones of the oppressors of his race, scattered about plots of weed-grown land in his own country. Who can say?
>
> The words were:
>
> 'WITH GREAT CARE'
> 'THE KULU APPLE'
> (The white man's delight.)
> (34-35)

The narrator's question "Who can say?" undercuts his role as the one who says. In the hands of a more skilled writer such shifts can serve a purpose, but the narrative shifts in this novel simply irritate.

Other narrative shifts are simply confusing. For example, when Walsh meets Ruth at the beach at midnight, he is overcome emotionally. The method of narration shifts dramatically from an exterior description by the narrator to a peculiar interior view of what is going on in Walsh's mind:

> The smell of her hair was maddening, feminine, and her flesh under his fingertips whip-taut. He said, with a small sob in his throat: "Moon makes me feel a bit mad . . . queer," and she held him closer, hard against her breasts, making a small whispering sound against his temples.
>
> *(If you shut your eyes and allowed your lulled senses to swirl you forward until you hung limp against her warmth, limp against her body like a swallow on a wall . . . it was as if you were gently chloroformed . . . almost asleep if it were not for the blood squirting in your heart, making it beat clocks in your temples . . . the starting and trembling of nerves. . . .*
>
> *It was as if you grew slowly into her, that essential her . . . grafting your body onto her . . merging your sense and your will voluptuously into her . . . until her breasts seemed to grow into you, firm and piercing. . . .)* [all ellipses in text]
>
> She was speaking to him softly, her mouth against his ear . . . (201-2)

The italicised portion is evidently the thoughts of Walsh, but the use of the pronoun "you" is clumsy. Walsh has just stated that he feels a bit "mad": presumably the italicised part is Durrell's attempt to render this feeling on the page. The breathless stopping and starting of the text emulates Walsh's sexual feelings, but the pronoun "you" tears the focus away from Walsh and places it on the reader, producing a silly effect. Usually when a narrator uses "you," he does so because what he is saying is general in nature, not intensely personal and particular as in this example.

Although the narrative experiments in this novel are not successful, they do show Durrell's interest in formal matters. Instead of abandoning narrative experimentation, Durrell increases it with subsequent novels, each time refining his technique by trying different forms. He uses a variety of narrators in his work: the confusion of the narrative in _Pied Piper of Lovers_ is only the beginning of his search for a particular narrative style.

Thus, in this novel are the germs of two of Durrell's major concerns: love and narrative. _Pied Piper of Lovers_ shows the necessity of love and an acceptance of the senses in the development of self-knowledge and happiness. This novel also shows Durrell's interest in the manipulation of narrative point of view and the various techniques of making known the story. He continues his narrative experimentation throughout his career, and the problems in this novel are not cleared up immediately. In fact the next three novels extend the experiment with narration, with various degress of success, setting the stage for the more accomplished experimentation of the Quartet. His view of knowledge and the idea that it is gained through love do not change fundamentally; they are refined through the next fourteen novels.

Part Two: _Panic Spring_

Durrell's second novel, _Panic Spring_, was published in 1937 under the name "Charles Norden." As is noted in *Lawrence Durrell: An Illustrated Checklist*, this was the "first of Durrell's books to be published by Faber, who suggested a pseudonym because *Pied Piper of Lovers* had been a failure" (Thomas 2-3). Durrell thought very little of this novel as he reveals in a letter to Henry Miller: ". . . Faber and Faber have put me on a three-novel contract, starting with a cheap romance called *Panic Spring*, which is a leprous distillment. . . ." (*A Private Correspondence* 32). Over twenty years later, Durrell dismisses both his first and second novels. In the *Paris Review* interview (April 23, 1959), the interviewers say: "It seems your writing very much improved when you got to Corfu. For instance, *Panic Spring* is very much better than *Pied Piper of Lovers*" (Mitchell 261). Durrell agrees, but he points out, "It's still a damn bad book" (262). Clearly Durrell was not satisfied with his early novels, and we can see from the changes he made from the first to the second, and the subsequent changes in the thirteen novels to follow, that he was experimenting with narrative form.

Unlike *Pied Piper*, which tells the story of one man from birth to adulthood, *Panic Spring* examines the lives of a few characters at various stages. The most important link between the novels is the character Walsh Clifton. Ruth has died and Walsh has gone with Gordon to Greece. They are guests of Rumanades who owns an island named Mavrodaphne and who collects interesting people to stay on his island. The other characters include Christian Marlowe, a school teacher on holiday; Francis, a young artist; and Fonvisin, a doctor. In terms of the overall theme, there is little difference between Durrell's initial two novels. Like the first the second deals with the importance of love to knowledge. The difference is that there is little in *Panic Spring* on formal education or religion. The focus has shifted somewhat to music, art, and philosophy. The characters who endeavour to gain knowledge through these avenues are Walsh, Francis, and Marlowe, respectively.

It becomes clear in *Panic Spring* that the characters develop ways of seeking knowledge because they are creatures of time. At the end of Chapter Eleven, "World Without End," Rumanades thinks about life in terms of time:

> It was only at night, he reflected, that the old hauntings and superstitions clouded the mind, and the spirit knew that there was no hope for it. I think perhaps at that moment he was seeing his own death, and understanding it as he had never succeeded in understanding the life of the little gang of chattering men in coloured clothes who stood on the stinking jetty and enjoyed a communion of banter and humour, each with his fellow. . . . Nevertheless, that night, standing on the balcony of his room, in his striped pyjamas, staring out to sea, he was shaken by a sort of grief . . . a grief for the life that was slipping away through his fingers, second by second, and which he was loath to renounce; for the garden and the stars, and the progression of days he had known, which could not go on

> forever. Time was his enemy and his friend as much as Marlowe's. (313-4)

In his own way Rumanades has tried to form close connections with people. In the present and recent past of the novel, he has tried very hard to keep Francis close to him. And in the distant past he had tried even harder to maintain a relationship with his wife.

Rumanades is unable to have a successful relationship with a woman because of his possessive nature. He virtually buys his wife, Manuela, who despises him, and unable to control her or win her love, Rumanades finally has her made into a mummy. He wants the mummy to look pregnant, a condition his wife was never in, and so the body is stuffed with rags. He draws on the mummy's cement container "a phoenix at the head and at the foot a nightingale" (157). When the mummy comes to life, he shoots it.

Rumanades' mummification of his wife foreshadows Julian's construction of a woman in Nunquam. Both Rumanades and Julian have a desperate need to fill the emotional voids in their lives. When they cannot do so by establishing intimacy with others, notably women, they try to create what they can control in the hopes of forcing love. But forcing love is impossible, and thus both Julian and Rumanades fail at what they most need: unity with another human being. Their isolation leads to further moral deterioration and ultimately to death. Trying to create love in artificial ways leads to disaster.

Rumanades and Julian are destroyed because they are attempting to control other human beings or approximations of human beings. Love cannot be demanded or controlled; it must be freely given.

The other characters' attempts to fill the void are more conventional and certainly more appropriate, suggests the novel. Francis' desire for an intellectual life pushes her out of her provincial life and severs her ties to her stifling parents. In addition to painting Francis has tried writing: "she wrote an impetuous, arrogant, formless novel about village life in general and village parsons in particular, which no one would publish" (210). When she is able, she buys books and prints.

But the intellectual life is not enough for Francis, nor, the novel points out, is it enough for anyone. In addition to a rich intellectual life, Francis also needs human contact; she needs love. These she finds in Reuben:

> The logical development of friendship between Reuben and Francis takes their history into the field of the literary commonplace; for what is more commonplace in the world today than love? And yet, what is more rare? For if the cinema, the Sunday paper, the novel, the dance number, deal almost exclusively with the subject, they are incitements to a manifestly inferior form of this unique disease. . . . There should be two words with which to express the two conditions of this malady; for men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for the love expressed in jazz tunes, in fashion advertisements, not for the love extolled by bishops, prostituted by society novelists, not for the penny

> journalist's cipher, the advertisement magnate's index to success. No, not for these.
>
> Francis and Reuben joined that great band of lovers whose acts are played out in a thousand furnished rooms, and tenements, behind soiled curtains, among the dusty furniture of town-life; among the bric-a-brac which countless generations of other lovers have passed over without comment. (226-7)

The tone of the narrator is paternal and despairing when he is describing the love of Francis and Reuben and all the other poverty-stricken people in love. As is to be expected, Francis is much less negative, but she still sees the problems:

> . . . Francis would wonder how it could be that here, in this single little lair, they had built up a world which matched the world outside; that here, in this single cell, they had discovered something which discounted the activities in those millions of cells which make up the giant honeycomb. Lying there, staring at the ceiling on which the grimy pattern of light from the corner street-lamp played, she would, in her mind, tunnel those million labyrinthine nooks and coigns, seeking out the other lovers who, like themselves, were trying to make something bright and keen from the mud and despair which surrounded them. (227-8)

Francis sees love as the way out of the despair of poverty, but in her case, poverty defeats the love she and Reuben share. Although poverty does not destroy their love, it makes a life together impossible. That Francis still loves Reuben even after he is gone and that Walsh still loves Ruth even though she is dead is shown clearly when these two characters attempt to assuage their loneliness:

> But when he turned to her he was no longer Walsh, and she herself no longer Francis. The metamorphosis of the moon and place had made them, strangely, into Reuben and Ruth. His face hanging above her was all Reuben, so that she put an arm up to his throat and began to cry, in long painful sounds, her face puckered in the grimace of weeping. (285)

Francis tells Walsh, "it's no use" (286). For her the pain is unstoppable--even painting does not seem to be able to provide forward impetus.

Francis is the type of character whose answer to the pain of life is to retreat. This view is reflected in her comments about painting. When she is being criticised for throwing her canvases about, she counters Fonvisin's remark that her actions are the result of artistic conscience by saying:

> "When Cezanne couldn't get what he wanted--some frightfully subtle relation of colours--he left a blank on the canvas. Just a gap in the colour. That was real conscience. If mine were half as strong I should produce nothing but a series of blank canvases." (172)

Francis' loss manifests itself in withdrawal--both personal and artistic. After the death of Rumanades, however, she appears to change her mind. This change is the result of Walsh's argument that they must live. He tells Francis, "'[W]e're fools to deny life. It's to be or not to be all over again'" (369).

Walsh's view of life is tempered by his view of time. He believes in life in the present. When he and Francis are paying their respects to the body of Rumanades, Walsh asks her, "'Why are we all so dead? Why do we live exclusively in the past and the future?'" (368). He thinks

> of the old man's face on the night of the party, of Manuela's photograph, of Fonvisin's mummy, of Marlowe, but above all of himself and his own want. He was in a rage with the girl for not flinging down every obstacle to grasp the delight within reach. Couldn't she see that nothing but the immediate necessity mattered, not the codes, the complexes, the revulsions? (368)

Walsh's view of the importance of the immediate is reflected in his interest in music. He doesn't care about stealing and changing the words of songs--what is important is the music. Walsh's and Francis' views of art differ as do their views of life and time. Walsh and Gordon, however, do appear to have reached a consensus, and, therefore, can create their songs together, Gordon writing the words, Walsh the music. As Gordon tells Marlowe: "'We get nearly all our ideas from the Elizabethans. . . We touch them up, bastardise, sentimentalise, bowdlerise the damn things, and ram them down the throats of the G.B.P. Not the tunes. The words'" (188). Gordon goes on to explain how their biggest hit so far has been a parody of Hamlet's most famous soliloquy. He calls it "destructive satire" (189).

Hamlet's question, "to be or not to be," is extremely relevant to Panic Spring with its cast of characters who are all, to some extent, trying to sort out how to be or how not to be. Rumanades finally gives in to not being by causing his death. Francis nearly gives into not being but through the care and concern shown by Walsh, she decides to try to be. Both Gordon and Walsh have decided to be; in fact, they believe that one must exist in the present through the experience of the senses. As Gordon says to Marlowe, "'You can't enjoy an orgasm in retrospect, you know'" (104). The pleasure that Walsh wants to have with Francis is physical and immediate, and we realise that she will come around to his way of thinking when we are told: "She regretted having denied him. She was sick with the futility of her own mind and body" (307). As far as Walsh and Francis are concerned, the novel ends on a slightly hopeful note. In addition to a possible break from loneliness, Francis may also get a break from financial worries: Rumanades leaves her money in his will.

For Walsh and Francis music and art are not enough: they need human contact, specifically love, to make life bearable. In their case, love may be necessary because it is an emotion they both have felt. The satisfaction they find in artistic pursuits pales in comparison to that gained through love.

Christian Marlowe sees the value of music and art, but the particular path to knowledge that he chooses is philosophy. Unlike the other main characters in the novel, Marlowe does not seem to be driven by his emotions, nor does he crave human contact. In fact his years as a teacher in a public school have made him shy away from people. Initially his job offers satisfaction, but as the years go by he becomes increasingly unhappy and resentful of being "subject to the publicity of all eyes" (19). Like the other characters Marlowe is concerned with his existence, with being: "To say of a man that he was born and that he died, is to suggest that his life is lacking in distinction. Of Marlowe it might have been said that he was born, and he taught; teaching and death being compatible as forms of not-being" (17). In order to avoid "not-being" Marlowe leaves his position and travels to Greece where he plans to write a book on Quietism.

Gordon believes that Marlowe is attempting to deny life, that his "'contemplative scheme seems to be built up on a sort of mental asceticism; mental celibacy'" (102). Marlowe denies this charge and counters with his own: "'You merely accept the impact of things, sensual, intuitive, physical things, for what they are. What I want to do is to relate it all to thought. To fit it into a scheme'" (102). Obviously Gordon and Marlowe have opposing views of life.

Although the tone of the book is favourable to both Gordon and Marlowe, it is a little more favourable to Marlowe. For example, according to the narrator, Gordon is fooled by his memory: "In his imagination (the heroic deception of memory!) he was confronting a wide English prospect, lush and delightful undulations chequered with crop and arable and fallow" (98-99). It is ironic that Gordon derives pleasure from the memory of a sensory experience--the sight of the English countryside--and yet he denies Marlowe the possibility of doing the same thing.

Like Walsh in Pied Piper of Lovers Marlowe has difficulty in establishing what he is to do with his life. Although he is much older than Walsh, he is at an earlier stage of personal development because he has never experienced love. His initial satisfaction as a teacher suggests that human contact is important, and when he is on Mavrodaphne, his interest in Francis also suggests that he has dormant emotions. When Marlowe receives a letter from his brother, his reaction is to turn to Francis:

> There was such a deep loneliness in him, now, watching, at the thought of Fred's world waiting for him, at the thought of Fred's letter in the pocket of his trousers, that he wanted to turn quickly to the girl and take her in his arms; kissing her would be a kind of charm against the future, against age, against the importunities of life. But he would not. (305)

The use of the word "would" shows that Marlowe makes a decision not to kiss Francis. It is not that he is unable to do so. He does berate himself, though, for not taking the opportunity, one which never arises again.

Philosophy, not love, eventually fills the gap in Marlowe's life. Having been unable to write all summer, Marlowe is freed from writer's block when he discovers some notes in the pocket of a coat he hasn't worn since he arrived. He spends hours working on his book of philosophy, oblivious to the passage of time. He stops only when Maria comes to feed him and he realizes he has to go to Rumanades' house for Francis' going-away party. When he learns of Rumanades' death the next day, he is not distracted from his work. Writing, a creative act, negates or diminishes the destructive power of death.

Christian Marlowe is a typical Durrell character at an early stage of personal development. Many characters in Durrell's works are concerned with becoming artists of one kind or another. In particular many are concerned with becoming writers, but in addition to their artistic aspirations, they are also concerned with making human contact through the experience of love. Marlowe's incipient interest in Francis is evidence of this concern.

Love is seen as the key to the problem of personal identity. In addition to providing sensual pleasure, it provides security as evidenced by the tentative love of Francis and Walsh, which is presented more positively than that of Francis and Reuben. Francis and Reuben's love is too desperate and too important. They have nothing else in their lives but each other. Consequently their lives are claustrophobic and stifling. In a letter to Alan Thomas, Durrell comments on the love between Francis and Reuben, and he shows that this is not the kind of love he admires:

> Reuben and Francis show fire but a paucity of conception. What I didn't

> make clear was the fact that it's silly of her to mind him going off to fuck one of his madonnas and get money for them: it's the wretched possession of love that I should have stamped on hard. Not used their pain as a cheap emotional pivot for a scene. (*Spirit of Place* 40)

Durrell's comment indicates his criticism of possessive love; in addition, it shows the importance he places on the imagination. Love alone is not enough to fill the void in life; it must be present in conjunction with an imaginative faculty that can create. Therefore, although the perception of love in *Panic Spring* is essentially the same as that in *Pied Piper of Lovers*, Durrell does give a few more clues to what he means by love and to what he thinks is a healthy kind of love.

Thematically, then, *Panic Spring* is very similar to *Pied Piper of Lovers*, but in terms of narrative form, the second novel departs considerably from the form of the first. *Panic Spring* has thirteen chapters varying in length from eight pages to eighty-seven pages. Most of the chapters deal with the present, that is, the action on the island of Mavrodaphne, but there are excursions into the past. Chapter Seven, "Walsh," is a flashback as are parts of Chapter One, "Marlowe"; "Chapter Three, "Rumanades"; and Chapter Nine, "Francis." Notably only those chapters titled with characters' names contain flashbacks. And only a few of the characters have their pasts or parts of them revealed. These characters are Marlowe, Francis, Walsh, Fonvisin, and Rumanades.

Thus the treatment of time is different in the first two novels, and this difference in the treatment of time logically results in a different narrative form. As James Brigham puts it: *Panic Spring* is structurally different from *Pied Piper*: the elements of its plot are grouped spatially around an 'almost static' core instead of being arranged in a linear fashion" ("An Unacknowledged Trilogy" 6). Durrell himself uses the word "static" in a letter to Alan Thomas:

> The book *means* nothing. I've tried--just for an exercise in writing to create characters on two continuous planes of life--the present--meaning the island and their various pasts. It does not progress as an ordinary novel progresses. The tentacles push out sideways while the main body is almost static. Whether I've managed to create the two planes successfully, or whether the total result is interesting I can't tell. But I do know that there's some interesting writing in it. I am beginning to feel that my pencil is almost sharpened. Soon I'll be ready to begin on a BOOK. (*Spirit of Place* 38)

Durrell's comment shows that he was well aware of and very concerned with the creation of characters in different time frames. The comment also indicates that he thought he was doing something a bit out of the ordinary. *Panic Spring* does have a static core, as Durrell puts it, and the various stories of the characters do push out in different directions, but this technique does not appear to be completely new or unique.

Virginia Woolf, for example, uses recollections and shifts in perspectives in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *To The Lighthouse* (1927), as does James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922), although it may be argued that their use of the past is more grounded in stream of consciousness than is Durrell's. While the modernist novel makes use of the past in recollections and stream of consciousness revelations, it is usually more concerned with those mental processes than with plot. So while the use of flashback or analepsis may be new only to Durrell, he may be using it in a slightly different way from former novelists because of his intense interest in the story.

Seymour Chatman's comments on plot are helpful in understanding what Durrell has done in *Panic Spring*. Chatman distinguishes two types of plot in his book *Story and Discourse*. There is "the traditional narrative of resolution [in which] there is a sense of problem-solving, of things being worked out in some way, of a kind of ratiocinative or emotional teleology" (48). There is also "the modern plot of revelation [in which] the emphasis is elsewhere; the function of the discourse is not to answer [the question "What will happen?"] nor even to pose it" (48). If Durrell has done anything new, it is to take a slightly modernist approach and mix it with a conventional narrative. For example, the flashback sections, with the exception of Chapter Seven, "Walsh," are not written in stream of consciousness. Thus, Durrell has attempted a limited fusion of the two types of plot.

In terms of his own development, Durrell is more free with his handling of time in _Panic Spring_: he has moved away from narrating events strictly chronologically as he did in _Pied Piper of Lovers_, and in his breaking up of time, shifting from present to past and back again, Durrell manages to make the past immediate rather than remote. The best example of the immediacy of the past is in Chapter Nine, "Francis," where we learn of the reasons for Francis' prolonged stay on Mavrodaphne. The narrative flows from the present to the past, so smoothly in fact that it is impossible to tell on first reading when the action is occurring. Although Durrell is fragmenting and rearranging time, paradoxically he is doing this in a manner so fluid that the distinction between past and present is blurred.

The chapter opens with Marlowe remembering physical aspects of Francis and then emotional ones: "He remembered also the ardour, the fury of her painting. . . . And more often than not she ended by kicking her easel, with the offending canvas on it, down the hill" (171). At this point the narrative appears to be in the present, but it quickly shifts to the past to include the feelings of Walsh, Gordon, and Fonvisin regarding Francis' treatment of her work. Walsh complains about the "littered" (171) hillsides and thinks of her actions as "sacriligeous" (171). He and Gordon often collect the canvases and bring them back. Fonvisin chalks up Francis' actions to "[a]rtistic conscience" (172).

The narrative stance is peculiar, and like the time sequence, changes rapidly and without warning. In the first three pages of this chapter, there are three narrative points of view or centres of focalisation. The first paragraph is filtered through Francis' consciousness while the next three are through Marlowe's. The next three appear to be through Marlowe's consciousness, and yet it sounds as if he is not present to hear the words of the characters although he comments on them in the next paragraph:

> She was invulnerable, and Marlowe, watching her as she lounged home across the hill, was aware that her invulnerability was simply detachment. She was dependable only on herself: that rather unsatisfactory and vague self which puzzled him. (172)

After this paragraph the narrative shifts to what can be only the third person omniscient, unfocalised.

The next six pages deal with Francis' friendship with Rumanades, but it is not until page 179 that it is clear the narrative is in the past, a distant past before the arrival of not only Marlowe, the newcomer, but also Fonvisin and Gordon. We are told: "The arrival of Fonvisin and Gordon altered a number of things. It altered, firstly, that delightful and ambiguous friendship which had become almost a flirtation of minds" (179). This section also contains authorial comment. Rumanades' embarrassment at his bathing-box is diminished by Gordon's suggestion that it be made into a diving platform. Unfortunately Rumanades has forgotten about the bathing costume hanging inside. It is found by the village idiot, and the narrator, with an air of authority, says: "[T]he laws of a whimsical chance are always producing things from hidden places to serve as evidence against us" (181). This comment sounds like the authorial comments of Pied Piper of Lovers: Lawrence Durrell steps in occasionally to comment generally on the world and its workings.

The narrative then moves from the bathing box, one of the things Rumanades has built to attract Francis, to the evenings of music, another enticement for Francis. The discussion of music in Chapter Nine reveals the various characters' views about time and what is important to them. Marlowe sees the cannibalizing of Elizabethan poetry in the songs of Walsh as "vandalism" (189); Walsh counters "Poems don't matter. They're all part of language. To bastardise music would be the final sacrilege" (189). Francis' view varies yet again. She says:

> "I don't think [poems or music] matters, do you? After all, nothing is original. All art is copied in some degree . . . [ellipsis in text] even Hamlet was. Why should it matter to what lengths people go? People who are keen on life, any kind of life, don't mind. It's only antiquarians and philosophers who feel tender about the past, and they don't really count." (189)

Marlowe is intrigued by Francis and wants to understand his feelings: "he wondered why she should present such an enigma to himself; was it, perhaps, a sentimental fiction on his part?" (189). What is interesting from a narrative point of view is that again the time frame shifts: we move back into the past and discover what Francis' life was like. Marlowe learns that his preconceptions were wrong. He had thought of Francis as belonging to a generation that "was all part of a semi-romantic self-abandonment to languour; the modish pallor, the almost Keatsian fading" (190), but he finds out that "the actual story was a different one . . . [which] Francis herself told him, in the bare syllables of a language which divested it of drama, and left the grubby trifles of reality bare and without comment" (190).

All the events of Francis' life--her escape from her parents, her affair with Reuben, and her attempts to make a living--are told in a detached, clinical tone until she learns she has the job finding fabric patterns:

> Leaning on the windowsill, unable to sleep, she watched the occasional passing of a man or woman in the dark street. Reuben? No. The yellow street-lamps, dusty bulbs of light, illuminated the clothes of the late travellers. A prostitute sidled by, attached like a leech to the arm of a man. Reuben? No. A policeman stared wearily at them, and then marched on. The street-lamps were suddenly snuffed out, without warning.
>
> Over there, to the east, faint light silhouetted the chimney-pots and the parched trees of the Square. Morning. (256-7)

Once Francis is on Mavrodaphne the narrative is rarely filtered through her consciousness. Although we have seen clearly into her past, a detailed past, Francis becomes more and more remote. And this distancing is reflected in the narrative.

Another example of how the narrative reflects the emotions of a character is Chapter Seven, "Walsh," which is in the past and which is mainly stream of consciousness. James Brigham suggests that this chapter was originally meant to be an ending to *Pied Piper of Lovers*: "Chapter VII of *Panic Spring* is devoted to 'Walsh,' and it may well be a chapter of *Pied Piper* which was cut out and replaced by the 'Epilogue' as a more satisfactory way of ending that novel" ("An Unacknowledged Trilogy" 6). Given the style of this chapter, Brigham's suggestion seems valid. Chapter Seven is far more like the first novel than anything else in the second novel.

The essential difference in the methods of narration of the two first novels is the treatment of time. In *Pied Piper of Lovers* the events are given chronologically; in *Panic Spring* time is fragmented and rearranged. Yet the first novel is much more lyrical on a sentence level--and therefore out of time--than is the second. Stream of consciousness is used much more in the first than in the second. Consequently *Panic Spring* is both more and less innovative than *Pied Piper* in terms of the method of narration.

In *Panic Spring* Durrell experiments once again with the formal concern of the narration of knowledge. As we can see, the experimentation takes the form of breaking up and rearranging time. His thematic concern has not changed from the first novel although his definition of love becomes a little more clear. In his next novel, The Black Book, he elaborates further on love as an emotion and as a means to knowledge, and he continues to experiment with form.

Part Three: The Black Book

One of the major problems in assessing the impact of The Black Book lies in the fact that it was not published in the United States until 1960 and in England until 1973. Although Durrell had a three-novel contract with Faber, the book was declined unless Durrell agreed to make radical changes in the language used. It appears that he considered allowing Faber to publish an expurgated version of the novel as long as he could also let Jack Kahane in Paris publish an unexpurgated version. But Henry Miller strongly advised him to avoid this course of action:

> Frankly, I am not in accord with you about accepting Faber's plan, just because it is a pis aller. No, with that logic, that attitude, you'll always be fucked good and proper. Don't you see, according to their logic, you must conform--because they control the situation. . . .
>
> Notice that one always thinks he must do something because he must earn the money which was involved. But that is nearly always a clever excuse we make to ourselves. We usually can do very well--even better--without that money. The only thing that truly nourishes is the doing what one wants

> to do. I tell you, everything else is crap, and futility, and waste. Let the angel be your watermark. (A Private Correspondence 103)

Miller's passionate argument swayed Durrell, and there was no expurgated version. The first unexpurgated edition was published in Paris in 1938 by The Obelisk Press.

The decision not to comply with Faber must have been a difficult one for Durrell, who wrote Miller that The Black Book "is good--(I AM TERRIFIED OF IT IT IS SO GOOD IN LITTLE FLASHES)--BUT NOT POPULAR" (A Private Correspondence 33). In a 1959 preface to the novel, Durrell tempers his enthusiasm but shows how important he thinks the book is in terms of his own development as a writer:

> . . . I can't help being attached to it because in the writing of it I first heard the sound of my own voice, lame and halting perhaps, but nevertheless my very own. . . . The Black Book was truly an agon for me, a savage battle conducted in the interests of self-discovery. It built itself out of a long period of despair and frustration during which I knew that my work, though well-contrived, was really derivative. It seemed to me that I would never really discover myself, my private voice and vision. (9)

The Black Book, in Durrell's view, contains the first indications of originality. In this novel Durrell begins to find his "own voice" and breaks away from being merely derivative. This comment shows Durrell's interest in and appreciation of the need for an original creative effort.

One of the ways in which his originality begins to show itself is in his handling of the narrative. As we have seen in the two first novels, Durrell is very concerned with how to tell the story. With The Black Book Durrell continues his personal experimentation with narrative form, fragmenting time even more than he did in Pied Piper of Lovers. He tells Miller: "In order to destroy time I use the historic present a great deal, not to mention the gnomic aorist" (A Private Correspondence 65). But the extremely loose temporal structure of the novel results in a confused anti-narrative.

This anti-narrative has gained some praise. T. S. Eliot, for example, admired the structure of The Black Book, but he is in a small minority. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Eliot said that The Black Book "is not a scrap-book, but a carefully executed whole." But most critics consider the novel interesting because it is a precursor to the Quartet. As John Weigel says:

> Had Durrell not written the Quartet, The Black Book might have remained obscure; for, despite its lustiness, it is a fragile thing. The characters, seen from the point of view of both the young Lucifer and the middle-aged Gregory, are grotesques. Dusty and shifty, they are loaded with adjectives and bright, tense phrases. They tend to wither in the light of an explication or synopsis. . . . These are not really characters. They are the "logic of personalities." As patterns and devices they will be projected--in space, out of time. (44-45)

Weigel's comments show what is wrong with The Black Book: much of it is artifice without any art. A much harsher criticism is that of Phoebe Adams. Regarding Durrell's development from The Black Book to the Quartet, Adams points out in the Atlantic that Durrell "has since learned to translate his ideas into plot structure instead of tossing them into the story like parsley on a fish platter" (120). Adams sees The Black Book as lacking any structure instead of seeing, as Eliot did, that Durrell was striving for a different type of narrative development.

It is true that plotting or the sequencing of temporal events is more or less omitted in Durrell's third novel and results to a large degree in insubstantial characters. If characters, who represent people, are divorced from a temporal existence, which people cannot be, characters lose their life-like qualities and become abstractions. Whether or not characters in novels ought to be life-like is debatable, but Durrell certainly thinks they should. In a Preface (1968) to Lady Chatterley's Lover, Durrell remarks:

> The allegory has been studied in such detail that I think the time has come to remind the reader that, though this is in some sort a tract, it is also a novel, and has a right to be judged as such. The conscious use of allegory is always a danger to a novelist's "characterization," and Lawrence did not always escape this danger. But from this point of view this novel comes off, because the people are quite real and the situation a plausible one.
>
> . . . his people are real people, real portraits, whatever their symbolic function may be. (viii)

Despite the many functions characters can have in narrative, it is clear from these comments that Durrell believes they must be life-like; that is, they must have some correspondence to reality. As time is the dominating factor in life, so must it be in narrative if the characters are to appear real. Consequently throughout his development as a novelist, Durrell is concerned with the handling of time, and this concern is demonstrated very clearly in the experimentation of _The Black Book_.

Some critics believe that in the narrative experimentation of _The Black Book_ lies the structure of the later work; however, I believe that after _The Black Book_ Durrell returns to a more realistic narrative line of development while experimenting with the handling of time in different ways. Seldom, if ever, does Durrell use the same narrative structure. In that sense, _The Black Book_'s experimentation aids the formation of the Quartet; Durrell learns more facets of the relationship between characterization and time, a valuable lesson for the writing of the Quartet.

Durrell's thematic intention in _The Black Book_ underscores the problems he has with its narrative form. In a letter to Alan Thomas, Durrell says:

> What I am after now is the real feeling for things uncomplicated anymore by our pal J.C. or ethic or code or whatnot. . . . What I am for from now on is the essential male and female relationship uncomplicated by mirages and falsities and wish fulfilments. (_Spirit of Place_ 43)

The problem is that he cannot show essential male and female relationships without characters who represent essential males and females not ideas, and he cannot do this if he takes his characters out of time.

The narrative structure of The Black Book uses some elements of Durrell's previous novels, in particular the first. For example, the stream of consciousness of Pied Piper of Lovers is used much more in The Black Book, and it is one of the ways in which time is broken. James Brigham sees the structures of both the second and third novels as responses to Walsh's question in Pied Piper of Lovers: "How in hell can I express the volume of things by daubing ink on paper?" (369). Brigham goes on to say:

> There is a narrative progression in the third novel which parallels that of one and two taken together, but the structural mode is spatial rather than linear, and is the product of a logical progression from the biography of Pied Piper through the annihilation of linear time with the use of "memory" chapters in Panic Spring. ("An Unacknowledged Trilogy" 6)

In terms of the narrative structure Durrell's first and third novels are more experimental than his second, and so I don't see The Black Book as forming the kind of progression that Brigham sees. Certainly, though, Durrell is learning about narrative as he goes along.

It appears that Durrell has taken the idea of multiple perspectives from Panic Spring. His first novel concentrated on the life of one person, Walsh Clifton, while his second looked at a variety of people. Limited somewhat by the detached third person narrative of Panic Spring, Durrell is unable to examine deeply a character's psyche. In The Black Book there are two first person narrators: Lawrence Lucifer and Death Gregory. These narrators are linked by the fact that Lawrence Lucifer is living in the same hotel that Gregory did and that he has found Gregory's diary, which he incorporates into the novel he is writing. Lawrence describes his work as

> an agon for the dead, a chronicle for the living. There is no other way to put it. There is a correspondence between the present, this numbness, inertia, and that past reality of a death, whose meaning is symbolic, mythical, but real also in its symptom. (20)

Gregory's diary provides the evidence of death. Although Gregory is not physically dead, he has succumbed to the sterility of English life, married, and gone to live in a suburb.

Gregory's death is symbolized by his decision to stop writing his diary: he can no longer create because he is spiritually dead. That creativity and life are synonymous is shown in the comparison of ink to blood. Gregory writes his diary in green ink. When his wife, Gracie, dies, Gregory notes:

> We set her down with an armful of magnificent flowers, as sumptuous as any cinema star's, and this vain promise of memory. What that frail decomposing husk demands from this, my life, is a pound of living flesh. I am paying here, however shyly, in green blood. (77)

Gregory's view of what it means to write shows very clearly the connection between being and writing:

> "Books should be built of one's tissue or not at all. The struggle is not to record experience but to record oneself. The book, then, does not properly exist. There is only my tissue, my guilt, transmuted by God knows what alchemy, into a few pints of green ink and handmade paper. Understand me well. This is the ideal being we call a book. It does not exist. And when I talk in this knowing way I intend you to imagine the work of genius I could write if I put my own principles into practice. Alas! I am too well-read to make the attempt. Or perhaps well-bred--because in order to write one must first be convinced that every book ever written was made for one to borrow from. The art is in paying back these loans with interest. And this is harder than it sounds." (121-122)

The task that Gregory sets himself in writing is so difficult, in fact, that he is unable to do any more than come up with a title for his novel: "URINE" (67).

Lawrence Lucifer sees himself in some kind of literary competition with Gregory: unlike Gregory he does not fall victim to the "English death" (102). Lawrence escapes Gregory's fate through his ability to write and through his relationship with Hilda, a prostitute whom he calls "the great comforter" (99). Hilda is similar to Gracie, and the relationship of Hilda and Lawrence is similar to that of Gregory and Gracie. But there is one fundamental difference. Lawrence is able to recognize and articulate his love for Hilda whereas Gregory realizes his love for Gracie only when she is dead.

Lawrence describes his relationship with Hilda in the following manner:

> Between the artist I, and Hilda the prostitute, there is an immediate correspondence. We recognize and respect each other, as pariahs do; we love each other, but we do not understand each other. Nevertheless we have made a truce. We share the scraps which life pushes up among the flotsam on that bare beach where those other beachcombers like ourselves raven. (96-7)

Lawrence and Hilda's ability to share is what is lacking in Gregory and Gracie's relationship although, as in so much of Durrell, the positive relationship is also doomed because Hilda is dying. The doomed nature of Lawrence and Hilda's relationship is reminiscent of that of Reuben and Francis in _Pied Piper of Lovers_: the couples share love but no future. The failure to have a future may result from the mistakes the characters have made, notably prostitution. Although Durrell has many characters who are prostitutes and although he treats them with compassion, not a single prostitute in his novels attains any more than a fleeting measure of happiness.

No Durrell character is completely successful: what is important is the struggle for self-identity and self-knowledge, which can open the door to happiness. _The Black Book_ explores two ways of gaining knowledge and maintaining a forward motion through life: writing and loving (with an emphasis on sex). Both acts are essentially creative--or at least have the possibility of being so. Being creative for Durrell is the same thing as being alive. To stop being creative has two meanings: to die literally or to die figuratively, as in the case of Death Gregory, who becomes incapable of both writing and loving.

Although the themes of the novel are easily distinguished, the overall structure of this novel is difficult to perceive. Henry Miller wrote to Durrell saying:

> The book, though outwardly chaotic and confused, a sort of monotonous avalanche, is really structurally solid and formal as a diamond. It happens that instead of using the mineralogical material of the form-worshippers you were employing the live, plastic material of the womb. (A Private Correspondence 78-79)

Although Miller had a great influence on Durrell, it must be remembered that one of Durrell's main criticisms of Miller's work was its formlessness. Durrell has always been very interested in form; Miller never was. For Henry Miller the purpose of writing was to reveal himself. In reply to Durrell's stinging criticism of Sexus, Miller wrote, "Perhaps it's a monster I'm giving birth to. But really, I don't care. The paramount thing is for me to get it out of my system--and in doing so to reveal what I was and am" (A Private Correspondence 267). Miller's comment that the form of The Black Book is that of the womb is appropriate for some but not all of the novel. The womb imagery is employed in the sections dealing with Lawrence

Lucifer and Hilda; the sections of Death Gregory's diary are noted for their images of sterility.

The two narratives of the novel, Lawrence's and Gregory's, form no pattern throughout the three books of the novel, and it is often difficult to discern when something is happening. What can be seen clearly is the importance of a commitment to creativity, as represented by the activities of writing and loving. Both of these activities are also considered to be ways for the individual to explore himself. Just as The Black Book itself was for Durrell "an agon . . . a savage battle conducted in the interests of self-discovery" (Preface to The Black Book, 1959, 9), so are writing and loving savage battles for Gregory and Lucifer. The difference is that Gregory gives up the battle and Lawrence continues with it.

Focussing on Gregory and Lawrence and their attitudes to writing and loving shows the importance of more than one narrative line for Durrell. Gregory's diary begins with a complaint about his very existence:

> "The eternal consciousness of oneself in substance and in psyche. The eternal consciousness of that shadow which hangs behind my shoulder, watching me flourish my ink on this nude paper. What a recipe for immortality! The one self and the other, like twin generals divided in policy, bungling a war. The eternal, abhorrent presence of oneself." (31)

Gregory understands the necessity of understanding oneself, and he accepts the role of writing in this process:

> I sit here by the fire with a book open on my lap and the wireless turned on full, and try to establish my identity --that myth which is supposed to exist behind the scuffle of words in my brain. This green diary, which began as a sort of pawky literary fanfaronade, has taken a sudden upcurve on the graph of emotion. It has become necessary to me. De Profundis, etc. etc. But I do not believe in God. I have endured many imaginary things, sitting here with my little book, alone, and afraid of making a fool of myself. (181)

Fully aware of what he needs to do, Gregory is incapable of the required action because he fears himself. Through his love for Gracie he is temporarily able to overcome his fear and examine and establish an identity. Gregory remarks: "Gracie, then, took me out of myself. In her, within her own ignorance, I created for myself almost a new personality" (182). With Gracie's death Gregory is thrown back on his own resources and finds them lacking. He says, "Do not make me repeat again that it is not she I mourn. My disease is egocentric, and therefore mortal" (183). Gregory's disease is really "dis-ease": he is uncomfortable with himself to the extent that he cannot face himself. He can adopt a personality through Gracie only because he has so little regard for her. Her worth as an individual is not clear to him until she is gone.

Once Gracie is gone, Gregory vows to stop trying to live: "To be or not to be has been the question for too long. I am determined to answer it in the negative" (195). The shadow of Hamlet is a long one across the pages of The

Black Book. There are numerous references and allusions to the play. Lawrence Lucifer thinks that Hamlet and Gregory have the same problem:

> I have seen more than ever the modern disease looming in the world outside this sea, rock, water: the terrible disintegration of action under the hideous pressure of the ideal; the disease of a world every day more accurately portrayed by Hamlet; the disease which made Gregory label the remaining days of life left to him, his death. (222-223)

Lawrence's view of Hamlet is Durrell's, and it is seen clearly in the Durrell-Miller correspondence.

In 1936 Miller was corresponding with Michael Fraenkel ostensibly about *Hamlet*. Miller, however, had never been able to read the play, so he asked Durrell to tell him something about it. In November, 1936, as he was finishing *The Black Book*, Durrell wrote back and offered his opinion of the play:

> Seems it's a perfect picture of the inner struggle, done in terms of the outer one--as all great books are, at least for me. . . . [Hamlet] is forced to be the Prince, however much his private Hamlet suffers. It is a marvellous picture of psychic and social disorganisation in an individual, and Shakespeare was not the only one trying to write it. The tragedy of Hamlet was the tragedy of the Elizabethan Age, the age which poisoned its young men with the humanities and then showed them none. It is the tragedy of England now, but more advanced, more grey and carious than ever. (*A Private Correspondence* 26-27)

Like *Hamlet* *The Black Book* is also "a picture of psychic and social disorganisation in an individual," but there are also differences.

Hamlet is a prince and as such has an impact on his country. Comparable to this role is that of the writer, who can have an effect on society. And all three characters, Hamlet, Gregory, and Lawrence, have effects on women because of their love for them. The differences can be seen as a matter of degree, but there is also a qualitative one, I think. Although he dies, Hamlet does what he sets out to do: revenge his father's murder and provide for the kingdom. Gregory dies figuratively without having accomplished anything. He fails to write his novel, and he fails to love and appreciate Gracie when she is alive. Lawrence Lucifer is in the process of doing what he set out to do: affirm his life through his novel and through love. He appears to be writing--we have the physical evidence of the book, and he understands the necessity of love. He is working on understanding himself whereas Hamlet does understand himself, for however brief a period.

Gregory's failure stems from the impossible task he has set himself. His view of novels and love shows that failure is inherent. When his friend Tarquin says, "We do not exist; we are fictions" (37), Gregory agrees and goes on to explain his theory of being:

> . . . I am suddenly aware of the lives potential in me which are wasting themselves. It is a fancy of mine that each

> of us contains many lives, potential lives. They are laid up inside us, shall we say, like so many rows of shining metals--railway lines. Riding along one set toward the terminus, we can be aware of those other lines, alongside us, on which we might have travelled--on which we might yet travel if only we had the strength to change. You yawn? This is simply my way of saying I am lonely. (37-38)

Gregory does not have the strength to change; in fact, he doesn't even have the strength to follow one of the lines, and so he is empty. When Tarquin talks about psychology and the necessity of "explor[ing] oneself" (40), Gregory reiterates in his diary the sense that he is nothing, that he doesn't have a being: "Everything is plausible here, because nothing is real" (40). His failure to have a self, to see simply endless possibilities but no actuality, prevents him from writing and loving. Of Gracie Gregory says:

> I think the reason I loved Gracie so much was that I could escape from myself with her. The cage I inhabited was broken wide open by our experience. She was not audience enough for me to hate her. Yet, writing nicely, "love" is not the correct word. For a man like me does not need love in the accepted sense. There should be another word to express this very real state. . . .
>
> . . . her stupidity made me feel safe, within my own depth. It was possible to give myself to her utterly. My desire was as unqualified by fear and mistrust as hers was by intelligence. . . .
>
> Must I confess, then, that the secret of our love was the vast stupidity of Grace and the huge egotism and terror of myself? (49-50)

In many ways Gracie's stupidity saves Gregory from himself, but the respite is cut short by Gracie's death.

Gregory's second wife, Kate, is chosen for entirely different reasons. As Gregory says, "I chose Gracie, because, she was, as women go, extraordinary. With Kate, I employed the method so much in vogue with the writers of best sellers. I choose her because she was the most ordinary person I could find" (208). With Kate, Gregory has no opportunity for self-examination because she is so conventional she cannot see beyond the surface of life. Gregory is quite correct in pointing out: "Kate is the monastery in which I am about to be interned" (208). He even says that in addition to their lack of intellectual companionship they will lack satisfactory sexual relations: "Kate's husband gave her so little that she expects nothing from me. An orgasm, for instance. She does not know what that is, has never experienced it. I will take good care that she never does" (208). In Durrell's novels a lack of sexual pleasure often signifies isolation and disharmony, themselves indicators of an unhealthy relationship.

Gregory's inability to participate in life is, therefore, the result of lack of self-knowledge and fear of himself. He is still locked into the notion of how things should be. He expresses this idea in his diary when he concerned about how he has distorted time:

> I am in such a hurry to finish the job that I blurt out the end, before the beginning. It is going through me at

> such a pace that I cannot distinguish the various flavours of incident, in their chronological order. (I am a liar. It is artifice which dictates this form to me.) (78)

Gregory's concern with artifice shows that he is victimized by convention. He cannot be honest with his motivation for his form just as he cannot be honest with Gracie, or Kate, or himself. He approaches honesty in his diary, but it is a private document, one he abandons in a cupboard at the Regina Hotel where Lawrence finds it.

Gregory's diary provides a counterpoint for Lawrence Lucifer who includes portions of it in his book. Lawrence has concerns similar to Gregory's: he wants to write and to be connected to someone. I think seeing Gregory's failure makes it possible for Lawrence to continue his struggle. It is also important that Lawrence lives in the Regina Hotel and meets many of Gregory's friends. The time spent in the Regina is described as a "living limbo" (55), a state actually separated from time and life. But Lawrence manages to break away from the "individual and collective funerals" (55) in the Regina. He goes to Greece where he writes his novel.

Lawrence's plan for his novel sounds like _The Black Book_:

> It is difficult, because everything must be included: a kind of spiritual itinerary which will establish the novel once and for all as a mode which is already past its _senium_. I tell myself continually that this must be something without beginning, something which will never end, but conclude only

> when it has reached its own genesis again: very well, a piece of literary perpetual motion, balanced on a hair, maintaining its precarious equilibrium between life and heraldry. . . . It is such a book as Gregory could not even imagine, could not even begin to _plan_. (66)

Lawrence's goal is similar to that of other modernist writers: opening up the form of the novel is a concern of many writers in the first part of the twentieth century. As Michael Hollington points out, "the keynote of Modernism is liberation, an ironic distrust of all absolutes, including those of temporal or spatial form" (432). For example, Conrad, Ford, Joyce, and Woolf offer new ways of approaching narrative from the perspectives of both point of view and the handling of time. Modernism includes various disparate movements: Dadaism, Surrealism, Vorticism, and Imagism are just a few. Durrell's experimentation in narrative, including both spatial and temporal forms, is evidence of his interest in the prevailing aesthetic concerns of the time. In fact his career as a novelist spans much of the twentieth century, and his novels reflect the changing views of narrative over the years. _The Black Book_, while certainly not problem-free, offers a look at some of the predominant literary movements of the 1920s and 1930s.

Lawrence Lucifer takes a stance different from Gregory's on what a novel is. And this perspective is the result of a different view of life. Lawrence writes:

> It is not what one thinks, I have

> discovered from the books I read, that is important; it is not even what one does. It is what one is, essentially. That is why there is such confusion when I set out in an attempt to begin this spiritual adventure, because the fine logical borders of my reality completely disappear when a word comes to seize them; I attempt to put myself in jail, as it were, in the padded cell of language, only to discover that the whole external facade is implicated in this process. . . . (And then, to annihilate this confusion of realities, today there is a wind blowing up from the Levant.) (114)

In this passage Lawrence Lucifer sounds very much like a structuralist, railing against the power of language while at the same time being seduced by that very power. As Fredric Jameson says in _The Prison-House of Language_:

> So it is that our possession by language, which "writes" us even as we imagine ourselves to be writing it, is not so much some ultimate release from bourgeois subjectivism, but rather a limiting situation against which we must struggle at every instant. (140)

Lawrence does manage to put himself in the "padded cell" or the "prison-house of language," but by doing so he becomes free. The struggle is a difficult one, but the reward is worth the battle. Out of the struggle comes "the age which lies beyond all this, the new dimension, the novel being--a dim gnosis" (150). Through a novel one can gain knowledge: the light of knowledge may be dim, but it is knowledge nevertheless. The "spiritual adventure," as Lawrence refers to writing, thus has a structure, but a one different from the previously familiar. In _Modernism_ Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane make the following comment:

> Modernist works frequently tend to be ordered, then, not on the sequence of historical time or the evolving sequence of character, from history or story, as in realism and naturalism; they tend to work spatially or through layers of consciousness, working towards a logic of metaphor or form. (50)

This is an accurate description of the principle of order used in The Black Book, the one that Eliot saw and appreciated.

Creativity is the concept that supplies order to The Black Book, the creation of books or of children. Lawrence makes a connection between writing and sex when he remarks:

> . . . I can only tell you that your fertility is going bad while you sit there, smoking, or reading the paper; it is falling away into the limbo of all this beautiful useless stuff which I am fighting, in order to try and break free from: in order to re-create and re-enter as a new gnosis. (160)

Like Gregory, Lawrence Lucifer can see the importance of creativity, both artistic and procreative, but unlike Gregory, Lawrence is able to attempt to create.

The difference is illustrated by the different imagery associated with the two characters. Lawrence's book is filled with womb imagery; Gregory's is filled with images of sterility such as the following:

> "What can I do? What can I do? There is no action in me. The very sperm that runs from my penis is null. It is not virtue going out from me, but a dead

> loss to the body, the psyche, the will. My vitality runs out of me like pus, and there is no figure of grief strong enough to express it. . . ." (220)

Sexually and artistically, Gregory is sterile. As it turns out, Lawrence Lucifer is not, but he has no sexual issue in The Black Book, only an artistic one. Lawrence Lucifer and Hilda are unable to have a child because Hilda has had a hysterectomy. Lawrence impregnates Chamberlain's wife in a one-time encounter, which is confusing to both of them. Lawrence writes: "[The dogs] do not know what to make of this situation, any more than we do. If I put out my arms and comfort her it is Chamberlain I am petting; to fuck her is like an act of sodomy with him" (155). Believing the child to be his, Chamberlain is happy, but there is to be no child. With the knowledge of the novelist, Lawrence tells us, "The child will be stillborn, I know, but I am not allowed to tell him that" (231). The loss of the potential child indicates the wrongness of its conception: the false beginnings preclude a birth.

The only birth in the novel is the birth of the writer, Lawrence, whose views are those of a creator, a user of language who fashions beings. He says:

> It is not the first time in history that the gulf has opened up between the people and their makers--the artists. But the chasm has never been so vast, so uncrossable. The creator, terribly mauled and disfigured, has become the audience instead of the prime actor. He can do nothing. In the subterranean Hades of the self, on the wet marsh flowering in great festering lilies and poppies, the delusions gather and hang,

> miasmic. The curative virtue is being turned to black bile, to poison, to corrosive. It is the Dark Ages opening again. We are going down in a supreme Dance of Death to the terminus, among the extreme unction of the violins. This is the going down into the tomb which Gregory experienced as a unit. (223)

The curative virtue can be seen as the power of creativity: in Gregory this power has been subverted and has become destructive while in Lawrence the power is incipient. At the end of the novel, Lawrence states his position:

> In the fantastic proscenium of the ego, when I begin my soliloquy, I shall not choose as Gregory chose. To be or not to be. It is in your capacity as Judas that you have chosen for me. The question has been decided. Art must no longer exist to depict man, but to invoke God. It is on the face of this chaos that I brood. (243)

Lawrence's choice for art reminds us of an earlier passage when he suggests what it is the creators have to offer. The intervening pages describe the struggle he has in accepting his role.

> We, who are sitting outside in the dark, the great unorganized body of creators, know for certain that it is our own tenderness that is poisoning us. The ingrowing cyst of the love which we dare not offer to the world. That is the germ from which the new martyrdom springs: the stripping of the body, fibre by fibre, the branding and cleaning of the soul. (162)

It appears from these unconnected comments that artists offer a way to bridge the chasm and that the way is love. Knowledge is gained through love, knowledge of the self and of the other. Lawrence uses the word "love," recognizing its limitations and its knowledge giving properties: "If I say I love you I am using an idiom too soiled to express this cataclysm of nerves, this cataract of white flesh and gristle which opens new eyes for me" (87). Of course, Lawrence equates love with sex. He doesn't deny non-sexual love; he simply doesn't consider it. Love, for him, means having sexual knowledge of another. Out of knowledge comes the possibility of creation.

The act of creation can be torturous, but not creating is even more damaging. Lawrence Lucifer's suffering resulting from his attempts to write show clearly the pain the process involves; the example of Gregory shows the death that inaction causes.

In *The Black Book* Durrell has continued his experimentation with narrative form, trying a far looser approach than he uses in his first two novels. This third novel is much more lyrical than the first two: much of it is not action but the thoughts and feelings of the two narrators, Gregory and Lawrence. Durrell's views on narrative and knowledge are beginning to coalesce although he is never satisfied with one particular narrative form. He continues narrative experimentation throughout his career. In his fourth novel, *The Dark Labyrinth*, he forsakes the radical and somewhat confusing narrative structure of *The Black Book* with its fragmented time scheme. He continues to develop his theme of knowledge and the ways of attaining it while adopting a much more conventional narrative form: the allegory.

Part Four: The Dark Labyrinth

Like the first three novels, The Dark Labyrinth, originally published as Cefalû in 1947, has been given little critical attention. Durrell himself was dismissive of this novel in a letter to Henry Miller, calling it "a queer cosmological tale about seven modern European tourists who get lost in the labyrinth in Crete where the minotaur has begun to make a comeback" (A Private Correspondence 201). Durrell went on to say that the novel

> is really an extended morality, but written artlessly in the style of a detective story. Guilt, Superstition, the Good Life, all appear as ordinary people; a soldier on leave, a medium, an elderly married couple (Trueman), a young unfledged pair, a missionary. I have deliberately chosen that most exasperating of forms, the situation novel, in which to write it. I wonder what you'd think of it. I knocked it off in a month in order to hold my depression at bay. (A Private Correspondence 201)

In The Dark Labyrinth, Lawrence Durrell sends his characters on a voyage of self-discovery on the Europa. When the boat stops at Crete, several of the passengers decide to visit the labyrinth. While they are inside, the guide foolishly climbs up a wall, causing a cave-in which buries him and leaves the tourists on their own--with no knowledge of the way out. How they deal with their predicament is tied closely to what we have learned about them on the sea voyage: their reasons for going in the first place and their ability to get along with other people.

Like the other early works, The Dark Labyrinth has had little critical attention. It was reissued in 1962 following the success of the Quartet, and reviewers were generally positive. Lawrence Clark Powell in The New York Times Book Review called it "quite simply a lovely work of art"(20). William Walsh in the New Statesman said:

> Sketchily supported by the minotaur fable, informed by a fine sense of place and decorated by formal human figures, it strikes one now as a brilliant travel book rather than a novel. It has the characteristics that one associates with certain kinds of 'Diplomatic' writing, a classically enamelled exterior and a nervous wooziness within--dark sweet wine laced with angst. (570)

William Barrett said in the Atlantic that it is "an adventure story and depth psychology all rolled together" (154) and that it "wears its symbolism more nonchalantly" (155) than the Quartet, which he called "turgid" (155). The anonymous reviewer for Time said:

> It suffers somewhat from the fact that Durrell has not yet asserted his independence from such models as Aldous Huxley, and from an excessive urge to moralize. But Durrell is already demonstrating his ability to make the reader care intensely for his characters, even for those--and this is true mastery--that are thoroughly unlikable. ("Maze . . ." 82)

George Reavey, in the Saturday Review, called The Dark Labyrinth "[l]eaner, more restrained than the tetralogy, yet a formally intricate novel" (24). He called it a voyage of spiritual discovery" (24) in which

> we become aware of deeper levels of inquiry, of intricate human patterns, artistic exploration of form, and even a subtle message. We begin to realize that "The Dark Labyrinth," despite a certain artificiality and some weaknesses, is nevertheless an important link in the chain culminating in the "Quartet"(24).

What these reviews show is that The Dark Labyrinth must be considered in any study of Durrell's novels because the formal and thematic concerns of the later more accomplished novels are clearly in evidence in this novel.

Although few critics have dealt with The Dark Labyrinth in any detail, two book-length studies of Durrell published in 1965 and 1968 touch on it. John A. Weigel says:

> The particular satisfactions in the novel come from the Durrellian sensibilities superimposed on an old formula. The novel owes much to Aldous Huxley, but it also has a voice of its own. Addressed to those who care, it takes its issues seriously. A safe interval above the thrillers it rather deliberately imitates, it instructs while it entertains; and it always distinguishes between the two values. (53)

Weigel gives a plot summary and discusses the allegorical significance of the characters. He ends his section on the novel by saying that it "reflects the best in the Durrell quest for truth. It deals with knowledge beyond the systematically knowable. Despite its derivative qualities, it is authentic Durrell and rings true" (54).

In his study G.S. Fraser calls the novel "a very interesting combination of nineteen-thirtyish or even nineteen-twentyish popular fiction techniques (stock characters, stock situations) with a very ambitious allegorical intention" (11). Like Weigel, Fraser gives a plot summary and concentrates on the allegory, in particular the significance of the names. He concludes by saying that it "is a thoroughly professional job, which does not disgrace Durrell" (100).

The novel was ignored by critics until 1979 when Frederick Goldberg published an article called "The Dark Labyrinth: Journeys Beneath the Landscape." In it he says:

> Thematically and technically it bears some relationship to *The Black Book*, to the *Alexandrian Quartet*, and to later works by Durrell in which reality may be presented as a rather confusing mass of unstable truths and ambiguities and from which, or in spite of which, a protagonist must create himself. (13)

Along with this important idea of a protagonist who creates himself, Goldberg mentions a key word for Durrell: "gnosis" (17). Ruth Adams and the Trumans, who settle happily into life at the Roof of the World, experience success, a success which is, as Goldberg says, "the triumph of a tranquil gnosis" (17).

More recent criticism includes James Brigham's article "Initiatory Experience in *The Dark Labyrinth*"

(1984) and Ray Morrison's article "The Influence of Otto Rank on Lawrence Durrell's The Dark Labyrinth, Sappho, and The Alexandria Quartet" (1984). Both of these articles offer insight into the importance of self-knowledge and its relation to the meaning of life in Durrell's work.

Being lost in the darkness of the labyrinth is, of course, similar to being lost in the moral darkness of the world, and each of the characters in this novel, as Alan Friedman says, "achieves, as in all moralities, the fate implicit in his character" (4). Friedman does not examine what these fates are and simplifies the novel somewhat by saying that at its violent climax "sudden visionary insight sears away the blindness of self-delusion"(41). Not all the characters who are trapped in the labyrinth experience "sudden visionary insight." Some do, but the importance of the didactic allegory lies in the reader's response to the characters' acceptance or rejection of their situation.

The fates meted out to the characters are, as Friedman points out, fitting. For example, the guide is killed immediately in the cave-in caused by his own stupidity. The guide's climbing the wall "was particularly silly and dangerous, as Campion had pointed out in acid tones, since if he broke his leg they would never find their way out" (167). Like the guide, who has excessive pride in his abilities to protect the tourists, Miss Dombey, the religious fanatic, also dies, and by her own hand. She swallows some sleeping pills that she carries around in her pocket and dies asking God, "'Why have I never really believed in You?'" (189). The certainty with which both Jannadis, the guide, and Miss Dombey live their lives contributes to their shocking deaths. Jannadis dies because of his foolish certainty; Miss Dombey kills herself because her religious certainty is revealed as counterfeit. It is ironic that at the time of her death, Miss Dombey is on her way to Egypt to spread the word of the end of the world, an event she believes will take place in the next year.

The third person to die as a result of the accident in the labyrinth is Fearmax, a psychic who has been deserted by his spirit guide, "French Marie." After the failure of his abilities as a medium, Fearmax devotes most of his time to a group called the Astrophysical Believers and to being psychoanalysed by Hogarth. Fearmax's trip on the Europa is supposed to solve two problems. Hogarth thinks it will give him a rest, and the group members think it is a good opportunity for Fearmax to visit the pyramids and settle an account with a rival group, the Society of the Great Pyramid.

Both Hogarth and the group are wrong: Fearmax dies in the labyrinth although he is not crushed in the cave-in. Ostensibly he is killed by the minotaur. Of course, there is no minotaur. There is a cow in the labyrinth whose mooing is distorted by the tunnels. And near the end of the novel we learn that the Jannadis brothers have paid a boy to blow a horn into the labyrinth to create unearthly sounds. The question remains: what kills Fearmax?

The answer to this question can be found in the conversations between Hogarth and Fearmax. As he is wandering through the labyrinth, Fearmax remembers the words of his psychoanalyst:

> "We act our inner symbolism outward into the world. In a very real sense we do create the world around us since we get it to reflect back our inner symbolism at us. Every man carries a little myth-making machine inside him which operates often without him knowing it. Thus you might say that we live by a very exacting kind of poetic logic--since we get exactly what we ask for, no more and no less." (192-3)

It is at this point that Fearmax hears the roar of the minotaur and begins to walk towards the sound. The memory of Hogarth's words makes Fearmax question reality:

> was this whole place merely a mad exteriorization of his inner confusion; his feet walking slowly down metaphoric corridors of his own subconscious--in which only the roar of the sleeping monster gave him a clue to his primal guilt? (193)

The Jungian (and Rankian, as Morrison points out) overtones of both Fearmax's and Hogarth's thoughts are inescapable, and they contribute to the conclusion that Fearmax is the victim of his own desires not a minotaur (which doesn't exist anyway).

Walking closer to the sound, Fearmax talks to himself:

> "Suppose, then, that all this were simply an apprenticeship."
> "Toward what possible end?"
> "A novitiate towards a new degree of self-knowledge."
> "My poor man, you are raving." (194)

Fearmax begins to believe or hope that "French Marie" is waiting for him in the labyrinth, and continues to make his way closer to the sound of the minotaur. He finally sees "what appeared to him to be a pair of small bloodshot eyes moving towards him" (196-197), and we are told that he then "put his hands over his face and mentally surrendered himself to it" (197). Fearmax is the most consistently allegorical character. Clearly as he surrenders himself to the minotaur on one level, he is also surrendering himself to his own heart of darkness on another level. If Hogarth is right that we get what we ask for, then Fearmax surely asked for and wanted death in order to be united with his spirit guide. The only "person" Fearmax has ever been close to is "French Marie," and the loss of her is unbearable. If regaining contact with her involves death, Fearmax demonstrates the absolute necessity of the contact by walking into death.

The three characters who die in the labyrinth do so for different reasons, but there is a consistency of action. In a sense all three characters commit suicide: Jannadis' foolish action brings down the cave wall on him, Miss Dombey swallows sleeping pills, and Fearmax walks into the minotaur. It is the two latter characters who are the interesting ones, though, because they both die from fear of being alone and they both choose to die. Although Jannadis' actions cause his death, the death is clearly an accident. The difference between Fearmax's motive for death and Miss Dombey's is that Fearmax believes he is going toward something while Miss Dombey believes she has lost everything, even her faith.

The accident in the labyrinth indirectly causes the death of another Europa passenger: Campion, an artist. Virginia Dale, a convalescent, and Campion survive the cave-in and find a way out of the labyrinth, but they discover themselves trapped on a narrow shelf of rock high above the sea. They jump into the sea. Virginia survives, but Campion does not, and we learn later that he cannot swim. In a sense, he, too, commits suicide.

Campion's desire for death is first suggested when he boards the Europa at Marseille. He tells Baird that he is still working for the War Graves people. In addition he says, "'But I'm painting like a fiend now. If only I didn't feel so much at the end of everything. . . . It's like getting farther and farther away from the human race--getting lost'" (104). Campion has lived a life filled with human contact, in particular female contact, but it is clear that all this sexual coupling has been unsatisfying and quite empty. It is not surprising that Campion leaps into the water, unable to swim out of it.

Campion's view of life--his psychological view--is very similar to Hogarth's and Fearmax's. In fact Campion had once written a letter to Fearmax because he agreed with a series of articles the medium had written. Campion expresses his view of life and death in the following manner:

> when the death-principle asserts itself in our lives reality itself gets turned inside out, so that instead of being detached from it--watching it happen as an extraneous thing--one begins to manufacture it, like a silkworm manufactures its own cocoon. . . . When one begins . . . reality is everything that is outside; when the principle of death germinates, first as a conscious idea, then as a fugitive subconscious premonition, finally as something beyond these: when that happens the fundamental _nature of reality_ is changed. The individual gets fixed in his destiny and irresistibly begins to manufacture his own personal myth, his reality. Around him there gradually accumulates a kind of mythological ectoplasm--it informs his acts and words. (113)

On the ledge of rock Campion ponders his fate and even tells Virginia, "I was trying to find out whether I _wanted_ to jump back into the world or not" (211). At this point in the narrative, the reader is unaware that Campion cannot swim, but even so, his life appears hopeless.

Campion has realized that he doesn't know how to live his life, and although he is an accomplished and respected artist, art does not offer him enough of a reason for life:

> Now perhaps if he should find his way out of this impasse, what could he devise for himself as a way of life that would fulfill the potentiality

> that he felt he was about to realize--
> now experienced only as a gaping hole
> in his moral outlook. (210)

Ray Morrison says, "Repeatedly Rank points out that artistic creation is an unsatisfactory substitute for real life" ("The Influence . . . " 143), and that Durrell agrees. Morrison ends this article by saying:

> As creator and creature, we must assume the task of self-creation and become our own works of art as we burn through the dross of personality "to win over the will to produce that inner order called love-in-time" [Lawrence Durrell, "From a Writer's Journal," 54]. Without such creation, we seem doomed to continue our long and vicious detour through the material amenities towards a happiness that will continue to elude us. (143) [The last sentence is actually a quotation from The Dark Labyrinth 249]

Happiness eludes Campion even though artistic creativity does not: his death signifies the relative unimportance of art to life. Art, for Durrell, should serve life.

Asked if the artist has clues for living, Durrell replied:

> It is very much to be doubted that he has, outside the world of his artistic formulations where the one constant message (of all artists at all times) remains exactly the same as it always was: and will do until the nature of the work of art is understood and embodied in a way of life, when it will cease to be necessary. ("No Clue to Living" 339)

In this article, Durrell also shows the importance of self-knowledge to an understanding of others:

> But I cannot help feeling that if our
> crises are conditioned by lack of

> understanding and good feeling among human beings no amount of hortatory lecturing will ever add up to a contribution. You get closer to your fellow man, paradoxically enough, by trying to get closer to yourself. (339)

And in an interview a year earlier the same thoughts are articulated: "The theme of art is the theme of life itself. This artificial distinction between artists and human beings is precisely what we are all suffering from" (Mitchell 276). Durrell's comments are echoed by his characters. The most obvious example is Lawrence Lucifer's comment that " a gulf has opened up between the people and their makers--the artists" (The Black Book 223). Campion's actions in The Dark Labyrinth are also indicative of this world view.

Campion's search for a new way to live ends up as a leap into death, but as James Brigham points out in his article "Initiatory Experience in The Dark Labryinth," life and death are closely related. Brigham notes that the first edition of the novel has an epigraph from Plato's Phaedo:

> Well, and is there not an opposite of life as sleep is the opposite of waking?
> True, he said.
> And what is it?
> Death, he said. (20)

Brigham sees The Dark Labryrinth as an allegory "based on the traditional association of the labyrinth with the womb and with rebirth" (19). But the line between life and death or rebirth is not a solid or fixed one. As Brigham says:

> When we read the novel with [the epigraph] in mind, it becomes clear that Durrell intends, first, to illustrate the indeterminate nature of reality by challenging our definitions of life and death, and second, to present an alternate path for Western man to follow which will lead him away from his destructive tendencies toward a more Eastern awareness of the meaning of existence. (20)

Brigham thinks that Durrell's message is that passivity is the key to a peaceful existence and that it leads to an acceptance of the world. The four characters who die are certainly not passive nor accepting of the world. Their deaths show how unable they are to reconcile themselves to life.

The life-death polarity is a recurring theme in Durrell's works. It exists with increasing frequency from The Black Book onward. More characters die in the fourth novel than in previous ones and the ways of death and the reasons for it are instructive. Although Brigham believes that Campion has a more Eastern view of death--that it is "another state of being"--I don't think this view is borne out by the novel. The dead characters are truly gone. What is important is a character's view of death while he or she is alive.

Comments that Durrell has made in interviews give plausibility to Brigham's view, but Durrell himself emphasises what one does in life:

> My own belief, which has been influenced by the findings of

> psychologists of today, is that all human unrest--whether personal anxiety on the part of the individual or explosions into war on the part of whole communities--is based on the fear and mystery of death. . . . The mystics, too, have told us strange and troubling things connected with death. They have said that due to our death-fears we have insulated ourselves from life. We have, so to speak, chloroformed the idea of death in ourselves and try to think of it as little as possible. This, say the mystics, leads to a grave loss of reality. We can only fully enjoy every second of life to the extent that we can come to terms with death--to situate it in the present! I take this to mean that we would realize the intimate connection of life with death and thus unburden ourselves of the unconscious fears that poison our living. ("I Wish . . ." 59)

Death must be dealt with and made a part of life so that life itself is fully experienced. Although Durrell does suggest in many of his writings--both fiction and non-fiction--that he believes in an after-life in a Taoist sense, it is important to note that his characters who do have an after-life have an artificial one, such as Iolanthe in Nunquam who is a robotic recreation of a person or Scobie in the Quartet who is recreated as a kind of saint.

To contrast the characters who die in The Dark Labyrinth, Durrell gives us Lord Graecen, who has been diagnosed as being fatally ill. Graecen survives the cave-in and escapes the labyrinth quite easily. Like Fearmax, Graecen remembers the words of Hogarth: "[I]f you think of death as a continuation of a process that has been going on for a considerable time it is not so serious a business as it really seems" (169). Graecen, however, is not comforted by these words: being alive is more important than accepting a process. When Graecen gets out of the labyrinth, he thinks, "Never had the world seemed so desirable a thing" (170).

Graecen also stops pitying himself after his narrow escape. This change is signified in two ways. First he gets out of bed instead of having a tray brought to him because "the day was too beautiful to waste" (258). Second, he realizes the foolishness of his earlier desire to ask Virginia Dale to marry him. He doesn't love Virginia: he thought that marriage would solve their mutual problems: he could provide for her financially and he could confide in her. But the relationship is not an equal one. Graecen and Virginia are reminiscent of Gregory and Gracie. Graecen is attracted to Virginia because of her social inferiority: "Poor child, he said to himself, over and over again, thinking of her cockney accent. He had come to enjoy it almost. He had found her errors and defects almost an added charm" (150). After his brush with death in the labyrinth, Graecen comes to his senses and realizes that he cannot possibly marry Virginia. His close call makes him realize the importance of his actions. The proximity of death helps him to be able to live his life more effectively than before the accident.

Two other Europa passengers discover what is important in life. With the help of Ruth Adams, who has lived on the Roof of the World for twenty-one years, the Trumans learn to accept and even to like their fate of being trapped on the plateau.

From the beginning of the voyage the Trumans are presented as a happy couple who enjoy life and who love each other. Their ability to grasp life is shown by their decision to take the voyage. They have won a contest in which the prize is a trip or a pound a week for life. They opt for adventure over security. The Trumans are secure in themselves, and consequently, their entrapment on the plateau is not as disturbing to them as it would be to others. Of course, they do not readily accept their situation, nor does their acceptance follow the same development.

Mr. Truman is more practical than his wife, and his acceptance begins when he starts to think of ways to improve their living conditions. Elsie Truman is more philosophical. The first night on the plateau, Elsie discovers Ruth Adams sitting up and learns that the old woman never sleeps. Ruth says, "Sleep . . . was invented for the tired. People are tired because their style of body or mind is wrong . . . There is no more need for sleep than there is for death" (244). Elsie is intrigued by Ruth's ideas, and they remind her of Campion's comments regarding "the existence of a beauty in her quite independent of her prettiness" (244). In the conversation

Ruth Adams reveals her view of life, a view that is central to an understanding of Durrell's works:

> "I remembered how life was before . . . I was outside everything in a certain way. Now I participate _with_ everything. I feel joined to everything in a new kind of way. Before I lived by moral precepts--for morality is an attempt to unite ourselves to people. Now I don't feel the need for religion, or faith in the old sense. In my own mind, inside (not as something I think or feel, but as something I _am_) inside there I no longer prohibit and select. I include. It's the _purely_ _scientific_ meaning of the word 'love'." (244-245)

Ruth Adams believes that the Trumans are capable of this world view, and what we have seen of them so far in the novel supports her judgement.

The separation from the world forces or allows a closer identification and participation with the microcosm that is the Roof of the World. Ruth Adams believes the Trumans are capable of remaining happy there, unlike the three men she was stranded with, because they have strong straightforward personalities. It is the ability to be onself and to have knowledge of oneself that leads to knowledge of others and happiness:

> "Most people's characters are like badly done-up paper parcels. And the outlines of the good personality, or the balanced one, are as simple and geometric as a problem from Euclid. I wonder why the world goes out of the way to drug itself--to retain the confusion? Of course, it's easy to pronounce judgment when one is out of the world as we are: but surely things like pleasure and work should be dithyrambic? Not narcotics designed to retain the turbid confused state of

> one's inner man. The things you were telling me, Mr. Truman, about the growth of the state as a concept, and the beginning of social conscience--all this is only a detour, a long and vicious detour through the material amenities towards a happiness that will continue to elude men just so long as they continue to elude themselves and each other." (248-249)

In the weeks following their escape from the labyrinth, and from the world, the Trumans strengthen an already strong marriage. They look more deeply into themselves, especially Elsie, and in doing so are more able to see each other.

The changes in the Trumans are described in two ways. One is the change in their perception of language: "It was as if they were being initiated into an entirely new vocabulary" (250). Their new vocabulary allows them to inagine a new reality, one in which they become unaware or free of artificial time. They are described as having "no sense of calendar time left in either of them" (253). The season is the arbiter of time.

The second change is in the nature of their love. Because they are learning more about themselves, the Trumans, and in particular Elsie, are less dependent on each other:

> Their love too had suffered a metamorphosis, for he regarded her now with something like admiration and surprise. She had changed; was less approachable, more withdrawn into herself--and by consequence infinitely more desirable than the shadowy companion whose journey through the labyrinth he had made easier by his jokes and his

> courage. "A savage," he said sleepily, thinking of the easy naturalness of her demeanor, her warmth: as if passion itself were the last point of communication between them. As if in everything else she had become possessed by herself, gradually excluding him--her dependency on him--for something richer, deeper, more intimate. (254)

Dependency appears to be a barrier to intimacy. Instead of allowing the natural expression of a person to be appreciated by another, dependency sets up an artificial standard of conduct and feeling. With the barrier of artificiality down and naturalness replacing it, passion becomes a focal mode of communication. It is crucial to an understanding of this novel and to Durrell's works as a whole that we see that the couple who can communicate and who are intimate reveal their communication and intimacy through sexual passion. The importance of sex cannot be underestimated in Durrell's works. One of the reasons for its importance is the ability of passion to stay time.

One of the first things Ruth Adams says to the Trumans is "Past tense, present tense--what does it mean?" (239). When the Trumans have lived on the mountain for a few months, they lose their sense of "calendar time," and discover that "there was nothing, in the deepest and most vital sense, to be said; no summing up, no judgment to be passed upon what had begun to travel through them--time in its pure state . . . " (255). They, like Ruth Adams, have begun to participate with things, the most important of which is time. It is a part of them rather than a construct imposed on them.

Compared to Durrell's other works of apprenticeship, The Dark Labyrinth is less innovative in its narrative form. It is an allegory in which the chronology is disrupted somewhat--there are flashbacks to the characters' pasts, and the narrative actually starts with a chapter called "The Argument" in which the cave-in has already taken place. In many ways, the time sequences are handled as they are in Panic Spring. There is virtually no stream of consciousness as there is in the first three novels--the style of the fourth is conventional. However, the use of the labyrinth and minotaur legend introduces to Durrell's work a kind of fantasy which he will employ to a great degree in Tunc and Nunquam. But far more important than these aspects of the novel is the thematic concern: Ruth Adams gives the reader the clearest statement to date of Durrell's view of the interconnectedness of self-knowledge, love, and happiness. Various ways of attaining self-knowledge are examined: religion through Miss Dombey; psychoanalysis through Hogarth and his patients, Baird and Fearmax; art through Campion (and to a lesser degree Graecen, who writes poetry); and friendship, love, and sex through the Trumans. These ways of seeking knowledge are mirrored in the journey motif of the novel and the descent into the labyrinth. The success of the Trumans (and the significance of the name cannot be ignored) shows which way is correct. Through their love and passion for each other, the Trumans overcome the seeming obstacle of isolation and like Ruth Adams begin to examine "the central metaphysical problems of the self" (250). Their success at this endeavour is evident:

> It seemed to them at such times that they had reached the meridian of human knowledge. The luminous landscape echoed, in its tranquillity, the thought. If there was no way back there was at least no way forward: the discovery of themselves was itself complete enough to prevent them wanting, hoping, striving. (255)

The Trumans remain on the plateau, but they are happy in their knowledge--the sign of their success.

Although still the work of an apprentice, The Dark Labyrinth is satisfying and, at times, compelling. When it is compared with Durrell's next work, the Quartet, we can see that the author has learned much from this allegory in terms of telling a story. In the Quartet, however, Durrell moves away from the mythological and fantastical. He retains his theme of love and self-knowledge, but he explores it in a more realistic setting--the Alexandria of World War II.

Chapter Two

The Quartet as an Investigation of Modern Love

With the publication of Justine in 1957, Lawrence Durrell was catapulted out of his relative obscurity and into the ranks of the financially successful and critically accepted. Much attention has since been paid to the Quartet and to the fact that in the note to the first edition of Balthazar Durrell calls the Quartet "an investigation of modern love." But few scholars have examined carefully the nature of the love that Durrell presents, nor has there been much consideration of what is "modern" about it. Durrell shows the mistakes in love that people are subject to, but the kind of love that is ultimately admired is not new or modern: it is quite ancient and conventional.

When asked in an interview whether calling his Quartet an investigation of modern love was a serious claim, Durrell replied:

> Yes, it is a serious claim, I suppose--love as the point faible of the psyche; human and divine love. Also don't forget that Freud has disintegrated the 'old stable ego' (Lawrence) and restored the old double-sexed Eros of Plato. There is such a thing as 'modern love.' But I hope to suggest that it itself is only a way of growing, a nourishment which prepares one for other problems, perhaps deeper ones? ("Lawrence Durrell Answers . . ." 26)

The influence of both Freud and Lawrence on Durrell is great and can be seen in Durrell's presentation of healthy love as one based on heterosexual sex. Although Durrell claims that he does not follow Lawrence's ideas, I believe he does to a greater extent than he acknowledges. When Kenneth Young asked Durrell, "How near would you say you are to D.H. Lawrence's idea that it is only through sex that you get close to the real universe?" Durrell replied:

> I have been very much influenced by Lawrence as a writer, but not as a person of ideas. Lawrence, in spite of his heroic and magnificent tilt at the conventions of the day and his attempt to deepen and widen consciousness (which he certainly did), remained at heart a Puritan. There is still a touch of Calvinism about his insistence on certain sexual motifs.
>
> . . . to cut off the head and exclude the reason in order to locate the affective nature of man in the abdomen, as he did, is to make the river flow backwards. My notion of the affective flow is upwards, a notion I have borrowed from the Hindus. Lawrence cuts the tree down, and emphasises only the dark roots; I would like the tree to blossom the other way round, and this can come about only from the happy marriage of reason and intuition. (32)

I wish to show that Durrell, like Lawrence, is quite conventional in his view of sex and love and their place in the pursuit of truth and happiness although I do not think that the Quartet is "a tour de force of ingrown Puritanism" (Rexroth 123). Nor does the Quartet ignore morality, as Lionel Trilling thinks. He says, "The love that is represented in the Quartet is never linked to moral sanctions of any kind" ("Lawrence Durrell's Alexandria Quartet" 9). Durrell is not as extreme as

Lawrence, but many of his views of love and sex are similar to those of Lawrence who says:

> the love between a man and a woman, when it is whole, is dual. It is the melting into pure communion, and it is the friction of sheer sensuality, both. In pure communion I become whole in love. And in pure, fierce passion of sensuality I am burned into essentiality. I am driven from the matrix into sheer separate distinction. I become my single self, inviolable and unique . . . ("Love" 154)

Love for both Lawrence and Durrell is a way for the individual to become whole, to achieve self-hood. And sex[7] is inextricably bound to this search for the self. As Carl Bode says, "The respect Durrell shows for all human coupling prevents the Quartet from being sensational and emphasises his conviction that the ultimate value of sex is what it can teach us about ourselves" (206).

Another major influence on Durrell is Plato, but Durrell takes Plato and welds him to Lawrence. Durrell told Kenneth Young:

> I am trying to illustrate the bi-sexual Eros which Freud disinterred after it had become lost, virtually since Plato. That is why I deal so freely with love in all its aspects. But in the last volume (Clea) I am trying to develop the idea that the sexual act is our "knowing" machine. It is the point d'appui of the psyche; and you can determine much about a culture or a civilisation from its approach to sex. (62)

Having said this Durrell places himself firmly in Lawrentian territory, particularly because he emphasises the importance of heterosexual rather than homosexual love. Thus to some extent what Durrell calls "modern love" is really a truncated version of Plato's Eros.

The various love relationships of the Quartet include many combinations of love and sex: homosexuality, incest, unrequited love, prostitution, adulterous love, and beneficial love, which is distinct from the other forms. Durrell's ultimately conservative[8] view of love can be seen through an examination of his various love and sex relationships and what happens to the characters involved. Therefore I will trace these various kinds of love through the four novels, delineating the conceptions of love and personality of individual characters and analysing the various failures and successes of the characters' attempts to love.

Part One: Homosexuality

There are three significant male homosexuals in the Quartet: Balthazar, Scobie, and Toto de Brunel. Love is not an issue for any of them throughout most of the Quartet. Their focus is sex, and they all appear to believe that because of their homosexuality, love is not an option in their lives. Not one of the three is happy at the end of the Quartet; in fact both Scobie and Toto are dead, the victims of murder.

Balthazar is the most intelligent and articulate of the male homosexuals and the only one who offers a clear statement of his position. Initially Balthazar believes that homosexuality is preferable to heterosexuality because the latter is too emotionally painful. He says:

> "Thank God I have been spared an undue interest in love. At least the invert escapes this fearful struggle to give oneself to another. Lying with one's own kind, enjoying an experience, one can still keep free the part of one's mind which dwells in Plato, or gardening, or the differential calculus. Sex has left the body and entered the imagination now; that is why Arnauti suffered so much with Justine, because she preyed upon all that he might have kept separate--his artist-hood if you like." (82)

According to Balthazar it is only heterosexuals who have a desire to possess or to be subsumed in another. He clearly believes that man must hold a part of himself inviolable, separate. Homosexuality is better than heterosexuality, he thinks, because there is no chance for the integrity of the individual to be violated. In this view separation is the key to wholeness. Using Plato as an example of what one can think about when engaged in sex suggests that Balthazar does not understand Plato and that he has not experienced love.

This suggestion is borne out when, in Clea, Balthazar is suffering because he is in love with a young man who does not care for him. This pain is caused by Balthazar's attempt to confront the passage of time, symbolized by the loss of his teeth. Earlier in Justine Balthazar loses the key to his watch, a watch that Darley says "signif[ies] the unbound time which flowed through his body and mine" (80). But with the loss of his teeth, Balthazar realizes that time is not unbound and that he is running out of it. At that point he is vulnerable and falls in love. But the love is never returned, and after a lengthy withdrawal from society Balthazar is ready to resume his social life. He still feels that his views on love have affected other areas in his life: "'If only I had had the courage to tackle my love wholeheartedly I would have served the ideas of the Cabal better. . . . Instead of letting my love poison my intellect and my intellectual reservations my love'" (706). The separation that Balthazar once saw as positive becomes negative. If wholeness is violated neither love nor other pursuits--in this case intellectual--can flourish. Anna Lillios points out that all the major characters in the Quartet "are trapped by notions of love that are inextricably tied to their own identities. They are caught in obsessive, self-delusive, and destructive patterns of behavior from which they must escape, in order to become complete individuals" (1). Whether or not Balthazar becomes a complete human being is undecided: his transformation is not complete by the end of the Quartet.

Like Balthazar, Scobie is treated with a great deal of compassion, signifying Durrell's acceptance of homosexuality as a fact. But just as Balthazar suffers, so does Scobie but in a much more final way: he is kicked to death by sailors when he is dressed up as a woman. "Tendencies" (225) or homosexuality for Scobie is something that should be hidden or disguised. He abhors homosexuals who lack discretion. He tells Darley, "'I can't stand that Toto fellow. He's an open nancy-boy'" (223). It's not the fact of Toto's sexual preference that annoys Scobie but his openness in exhibiting it.

Underlying Scobie's dislike of Toto is jealousy. Scobie admires the former flamboyance of his friend Toby Mannering, but during Toby's most outrageous periods, Scobie was a young man. As an old man, Scobie is often alone, unlike Toto, who has both male and female companions. In his old age Scobie reveals what he believes is wrong with homosexuality in general: "'the thing about Tendencies--you only realize it when you're not a hot-blooded young sprig any more. . . . It's the lack of _tenderness_, old man. It all depends on cunning somehow, you get lonely'" (227). Clearly Scobie sees homosexuality as leading to sex without the possibility of an emotional connection. He even tells Darley that he has one good friend, Abdul, whom he sets up in a barber shop and whom he never has a physical relationship with. "'Never laid a finger on him nor ever could, because I love the man. I'm glad I did now, because though I'm getting on, I still have a true friend'" (227). Love precludes homosexual sex for Scobie.

Although Scobie never finds a partner with whom he can share sex and love, he does have friends who love him deeply. His closest friend apart from Abdul is Clea, who pays for his funeral and takes care of his parrot. Darley is another close friend, and the trust Scobie feels regarding him is shown when the old man asks Darley to take away his female clothes so that temptation can be prevented. The love that Clea and Darley have for Scobie is demonstrated clearly by their complete delight in the discovery that after his death, Scobie is elevated to the rank of a saint by the people in his quarter. The compassion shown Scobie through his life is increased in his death although the powers conferred on Scobie the Saint--El Scob--reinforce the idea that heterosexuality is preferable to homosexuality. Scobie's bathtub was "invoked to confer fertility upon the childless--and with success, too, if one could judge by the great number of the offerings" (715). El Scob's fecundating power has grown directly out of Scobie's transvestism. In recounting the growth of the myth of El Scob, Clea remarks: "'They also said that he had been able to change himself into a woman at will (!) and by sleeping with impotent men regenerate their forces. He could also make the barren conceive'" (716). Scobie's memory is cherished finally because of the application of his mythical power in the heterosexual world.

Just as fate--or the author--deals Balthazar and Scobie a particular hand because of their relationship to sex, so is Scobie's friend Abdul relegated to a certain position. Abdul becomes the keeper of El Scob's shrine, a position that appears to be atonement for earlier acts against sex. In his barber shop Abdul performs the ritual circumcision of males and females. Scobie always objects to Abdul's circumcision of females and failure to keep his razors clean. He finally turns Abdul in, and the police beat him severely, causing him to lose an eye. After contracting a terrible disease, he has to give up his shop. Abdul's downfall can be seen as the result of his crimes against sex: in circumcising females, he takes away their pleasure, and in using dirty equipment, he hastens the spread of syphilis, a disease which commonly leads to infertility and sometimes death. It is fitting that Abdul ends up being the keeper of a shrine to potency.

The third main homosexual, Toto, also dies as the result of a disguise, but not a disguise to cover up his sexual preference. As Scobie points out, Toto is at ease with the public recognition of his homosexuality. This view is reinforced in Balthazar's description of Justine's coterie of friends who are made in order to deflect Nessim's suspicions:

> "she had already begun to build up a defensive circle of friends whose harmless presences might obviate suspicion of her--the little court of homosexuals like Toto and Amar, whose activities and predispositions were sufficiently well-known to everybody to offer no cause for heart-burnings. She moved now like some sulky planet in the social life of the town, accepting the attentions of these neuters purely as a defence." (295)

By surrounding herself with homosexuals, Justine can lead Nessim to believe that she is faithful. Once again the underlying message is that homosexuals are restricted from having full lives: they are "neuters" whose presence cannot have any significant effect.

Like Scobie, Toby is murdered while he is in pursuit of sex and while he is disguised, but the difference is that everyone is disguised because it is the carnival. The total cloaking of individual identity has a compelling effect on the populace. Darley says:

> The dark tides of Eros, which demand full secrecy if they are to overflow the human soul, burst out during carnival like something long dammed up and raise the forms of strange primeval creatures--the perversions which are, I suppose, the psyche's ailment--in forms which you would think belonged to the Brocken or to Eblis. Now hidden satyr and maenad can rediscover each other and unite. Yes, who can help but love carnival when in it all debts are paid, all crimes expiated or committed, all illicit desires sated--without guilt or premeditation, without the penalties which science or society exact? (344)

But Darley is wrong: society does exact its penalties, and the treatment of Toto is a good example. Justine lends Toto her ring, a ring that everyone is familiar with. Unfortunately for Toto, he makes advances to Narouz, who believes the figure trying to seduce him is his sister-in-law. Out of a sense of family honour, Narouz stabs Toto to death, all the while neither knowing who the other is. Once again the message is clear: inappropriate sexual behaviour is punished.

The treatment of the male homosexuals in the Quartet suggests strongly that although homosexuality is a fact it is an unfortunate one. Happiness is not within the scope of the homosexual because there is no sense of wholeness or completion in a homosexual relationship. One of the messages of the Quartet is that homosexuality is a poor substitute for heterosexuality.

Although there is no strictly lesbian character in the Quartet, Clea and Justine do have an affair. When Clea tells Darley about this affair, she downplays the importance of sex:

> "As for love itself--*cher ami*--I told you already that interested me only briefly--and men more briefly still; the few, indeed the one, experience which marked me was an experience with a woman. I am still living in the happiness of that perfectly *achieved* relationship: any physical substitute would seem today horribly vulgar and hollow. But do not imagine me as suffering from any fashionable form of broken heart. No. In a funny sort of way I feel that our love has really gained by the passing of the love-object; it is as if the physical body somehow stood in the way of love's true growth, its self-realization." (108)

Clea's speech lacks credibility because it appears to be exactly what she says it is not: the justification of someone whose heart has been broken. Paradoxically she implies that love is better--or even only possible-- in retrospect. Her denial of the carnal and her belief that non-physical love is preferable to it sounds faintly Platonic, but this view is considerably undercut when she returns to carnal pleasure at the end of the final volume of the Quartet. Her explanation to Darley of the importance of sex, specifically heterosexual sex, shows how much her values have changed:

> "Paracelsus says that thoughts are acts. Of them all, I suppose, the sex act is the most important, the one in which our spirits most divulge themselves. Yet one feels it a sort of clumsy paraphrase of the poetic, the noetic, _thought_ which shapes itself into a kiss or an embrace. Sexual love _is_ knowledge, both in etymology and in cold fact: "he knew her" as the Bible says! Sex is the joint or coupling which unites the male and female ends of knowledge merely--a cloud of unknowing! When a culture goes bad in its sex all knowledge is impeded." (739)

Sex becomes for Clea a way of knowing rather than an impediment to it. Her change of mind results from a brief passionate affair with a man, an affair in which she becomes pregnant and has an abortion. The suffering that Clea endures is perceived by her as beneficial to her growth as an artist: "'what wounded me most as a woman nourished me most as an artist'" (739). Like the main character, Darley, Clea has to mature as a person in order to become an artist. And one of the ways she matures is in her acceptance of her sexuality. She does not have any more lesbian affairs: she returns to the heterosexual world, the only one where happiness is possible according to Durrell.

Jane Lagoudis Pinchin points out in her book

Alexandria Still: Forster, Durrell, and Cavafy that the male homosexual relationships are not based on love. Pinchin's view of the affair between Justine and Clea corroborates the one I am presenting. She writes:

> Durrell's attitude toward this love [between Justine and Clea] is really quite conventional, for although he enjoys new visions of scandalous sexuality, he is sure that a good woman like Clea grows by discovering her heterosexual self. She must be cured of her homosexuality and her virginity by men, by lovers like Amaril and Darley, who ultimately reverse the sexuality of birth, giving Clea new life and, with a new hand, new art. Clea is the only female artist in the Quartet, and Durrell seems to be insisting that because of this she too must encounter woman, must love the deadly Justine, before she can truly become the creator. (204 below)

I disagree that loving Justine is a necessary condition for artisthood or creativity. Pursewarden is immune to Justine, and he is an artist. The real point is that both Clea and Darley are wounded by the same person, and they must comes to terms with their independent relationships with Justine before they can mature as people and artists and recognize their own union.

The idea that love brings people together and creates wholeness and the consequent possibility of happiness is an ancient one. One source of the idea is in the Symposium when Aristophanes offers his view of the role of love. He tells the story of how Zeus cut in half the original three sexes because they were getting too arrogant. These three original sexes were male, female, and hermaphrodite (also translated as "androgynous" in the Oxford edition). The split beings try to reunite. As Aristophanes says, "this love is always trying to redintegrate our former nature, to make two into one, and to bridge the gulf between one human being and another" (544). He points out that wholeness is necessary to happiness: "the happiness of the whole human race, women no less than men, is to be found in the consummation of our love, and in the healing of our dissevered nature by finding each his proper mate" (546). But the process does not end there. Love will eventually reunite human beings with their gods: "if we do not fail in reverence to the gods, he [the god of Love] will one day heal us and restore us to our old estate, and establish us in joy and blessedness" (546). Durrell has taken part of Aristophanes' myth--the notion that wholeness is achieved by finding the other half of one's being, but he sees wholeness possible only for heterosexuals. Durrell may have obtained his views on homosexuals and love from Georg Groddeck, a pupil of Freud, whom Durrell admires. In _The Book of the It_ Groddeck says, "The source of homosexuality is in narcissism, self-love, and self-gratification. The being has yet to be born who is not prejudiced against the phenomenon of self-gratification" (265). Thus, for Durrell, it is only the "double-sexed" whole creature, the creature formed by the union of a male and female, who has even the possibility of wholeness and happiness in the

Quartet.

Part Two: Incest

Not all heterosexual behaviour leads to completion and happiness. In the incestuous relationship of Pursewarden and his sister, Liza, Durrell shows another form of sex and love that is deemed unacceptable. Just as the homosexuals are treated with a certain amount of compassion, so are the incestuous brother and sister, but their fates, like those of the homosexuals, demonstrate clearly that certain types of love are wrong, according to Durrell.

The incest in the Quartet is particularly Egyptian. As Balthazar says, regarding Alexandria:

> "you can understand why this is really a city of incest--I mean that here the cult of Serapis was founded. For this etiolation of the heart and reins in love-making must make one turn inwards upon one's sister. The lover mirrors himself like Narcissus in his own family: there is no exit from the predicament." (82)

Balthazar believes that incest is caused by excessive self-love. Loving one's sibling is the next thing to loving oneself. In Penelope Lively's recent novel _Moon Tiger_, the main character, Claudia Hampton, clearly articulates this view:

> Incest is closely related to narcissism. When Gordon and I were at our most self-conscious--afire with the sexuality and egotism of late adolescence--we looked at one another and saw ourselves translated. I saw in

> Gordon's maleness an erotic flicker of myself; and when he looked at me I saw in his eyes that he too saw some beckoning reflection. We confronted each other like mirrors, flinging back reflections in endless recession. We spoke to each other in code. Other people became, for a while, for a couple of contemptuous years, a proletariat. We were an aristocracy of two. (136-7)

Pursewarden and Liza also form an "aristocracy of two," and Pursewarden uses mythology to justify his relationship with his sister. Liza tells Darley about Pursewarden's rationalization:

> "In the African burial rites it is the sister who brings the dead king back to life. In Egypt as well as Peru the king, who was considered as God, took his sister to wife. But the motive was ritual and not sexual, for they symbolized the moon and sun in their conjunction. The king marries his sister because he, as God the star, wandering on earth, is immortal and may therefore not propagate himself in the children of a strange woman, any more than he is allowed to die a natural death." (803)

This quotation is important for two reasons: it shows that incest is acceptable for god-like kings, not mere mortals, and it shows another reason for the suicide of Pursewarden.

According to Pursewarden men are gods. He tells Justine:

> ". . . I believe that Gods are men and men Gods; they intrude on each other's lives, trying to express themselves through each other--hence such apparent confusion in our human states of mind, our intimations of powers within or beyond us. . . . [ellipsis in text] And

> then (listen) I think that very few people realize that sex is a psychic and not a physical act. The clumsy coupling of human beings is simply a biological paraphrase of this truth--a primitive method of introducing minds to each other, engaging them." (292)

Although sex may be a paraphrase of a mental connection, the connection Pursewarden and Liza have is both mental and physical. It even results in the birth of a daughter, who like Liza is blind. It is after the child dies that Pursewarden begins to feel guilt over his love for his sister. The reason for the guilt is, I think, that Pursewarden can no longer ignore the fact that he is mortal, and he learns this lesson through the loss of his child.

Pursewarden's view of love--both the general and the particular--contains contradictions. Although he says at one point that a physical connection is secondary to a mental one, he also writes in "Notes to Brother Ass" that "If once we could loosen up, relax the terrible grip of the so-called Kingdom of Heaven which has made the earth such a blood-soaked place, we might rediscover in sex the key to a metaphysical search which is our raison d'être here below!" (760). It is significant that he ceases any kind of metaphysical search by committing suicide after he realizes that Liza is in love with Mountolive and after he learns of his mistake regarding the Hosnani plot. In addition to these two reasons for his suicide is a third: his belief that the Egyptian king who married his sister could not die a natural death. These reasons are compatible and stem from Pursewarden's basic belief that "it is honourable if you can't win to hang yourself" (293). He cannot possibly win his sister away from Mountolive, nor can he repair the damage done to his professional credibility. In his suicide letter to Mountolive, he calls his death a "quietus" (540) and says that it "will solve other deeper problems too" (540).

Liza survives because she is able to love someone else, and Pursewarden dies because he cannot love anyone but his sister. His attempt at marriage and a family life is a failure because he cannot stop loving his sister. When he tells Melissa about his incestuous affair with his sister, he says, "'We shall never be able to love other people'" (532). Yet in contradiction to this statement he has always, according to Liza, known that a "dark stranger" (786) would arrive to love Liza.

These contradictions are resolved in his death and are the outcome of his belief in the dual powers of love. He has written that love brings together and separates people.

> "At first . . . we seek to supplement the emptiness of our individuality through love, and for a brief moment enjoy the illusion of completeness. But it is only an illusion. For this strange creature, which we thought would join us to the body of the world, succeeds at last in most separating us from it. Love joins and then divides. How else would we be growing?" (377)

Certainly for Pursewarden love has worked this way: it first joins him and Liza in a world where they experience happiness and then takes him out of this happy world into one of guilt. Love ultimately takes Pursewarden out of the world completely when he kills himself. As he tells Liza, "'if you look beyond the immediate pain you will see how perfect the logic of love seems to one who is ready to die for it'" (787). Pursewarden's love for his sister pushes him to a death that will free her to love another man.

In the treatment of Pursewarden and Liza, Durrell shows that incest, even between consenting adults, is wrong. The death of their child and the suicide of Pursewarden are testimony to this view. Reinforcing this view is the fact that Liza survives and has the possibility of happiness and completion by falling in love with Mountolive.

Part Three: Unrequited Love and Prostitution

Unreturned love and sex for money are both unequal transactions, and Durrell uses both of these types of feelings and actions to show the pitfalls of love and sex. Several characters experience unrequited love: Darley, Justine, Narouz, Clea, Cohen, and Sveva. Darley loves Justine, but she loves Nessim. Justine's affairs often involve unrequited love, but they are more significant for being adulterous and, therefore, will be discussed in the next section. Narouz loves Clea who at one time loved Amaril unsuccessfully; Cohen dies loving Melissa; and

Sveva loves Pombal. Cohen's affair with Melissa is also adulterous, but unlike Justine, Cohen leaves his spouse. Therefore I will discuss his relationship with Melissa in this section. Melissa, a prostitute, has love to offer, but those she offers it to, notably Darley, are unable to return it. None of these relationships involving unrequited love or prostitution leads to anything but failure and suffering.

The least important of these relationships is the brief affair of Pombal and Sveva. When Pombal ends it, Sveva wrecks his car and throws herself in the river. What Pombal does not understand at this point is the seriousness of the connections people form. He has been too busy engaging in a series of meaningless affairs and blaming everyone else for the lack of mental connections. He has this to say about love in Alexandria:

> "To a Frenchman the love here is interesting. They act before they reflect. When the time comes to doubt, to suffer remorse, it is too hot, nobody has the energy. It lacks finesse, this animalism, but it suits me. I've worn out my heart and head with love, and want to be left alone--above all, mon cher, from this Judeo-Coptic mania for dissection, for analysing the subject. I want to return to my farmhouse in Normandy heart-whole." (24)

Pombal's view of love at this point is limited to sex, and so he cannot understand Sveva's deep feelings. It is not until he falls in love with Fosca that he gives up his affairs and has a relationship that is a meeting of minds not only flesh.

In the example of Cohen and Melissa, Durrell offers a picture of the folly of realizing love too late. Melissa is Cohen's mistress and she wants to marry him. He refuses, and when she leaves him for Darley, Cohen discovers that he does love her. When he is dying, he asks to see her, but she refuses to come. She tells Darley, "'Oh, it is so disgusting! Please do not make me go'" (88). Darley goes instead and becomes aware of Cohen's depth of feeling for Melissa. Cohen is ready to marry her and gives Darley the rings she had picked out. Although Cohen loves Melissa, it is inappropriate that they should marry because she does not love him: she wants financial security. This pair shows the damage done by both prostitution and unrequited love.

The most extreme example of unrequited love is Narouz's love for Clea. Narouz loves Clea, but he knows very little about her. For example, although he dislikes the city, he goes to the carnival every year in the hopes of seeing Clea. But she hates the carnival and never participates. When he goes to her house to confess the murder and his love for her, she is shocked. She barely remembers who he is and is horrified when he says he loves her. She tells Darley:

> "How disgusting, how unfair love is! Here I had been loved for goodness knows how long by a creature--I cannot say a fellow-creature--of whose very existence I had been unaware. . . . I felt almost as if I owed him an

> apology; and yet I also felt insulted by the intrusiveness of a love which I never asked him to owe me." (374)

Clea has difficulty overcoming her disgust even when Narouz is on his deathbed and she is the only person he wants to see. Clea has herself suffered from unrequited love in her affair with Amaril, yet she is not at all sympathetic to Narouz. Her words to Nessim when he calls and asks her to come to see Narouz mirror Melissa's when Cohen wants to see her. Clea tells Nessim, "'He is nothing to me, never was, never will be. Oh, it is so *disgusting*--please do not make me come, Nessim'" (643). She manages to overcome her aversion and sets out for Karm, but Narouz dies before she arrives.

This example of unrequited love shows the suffering caused when there is no communication between people. Both Clea and Narouz are hurt: Clea by the responsibility of an unsolicited love, and Narouz by an unreturned love. As he is dying and waiting for Clea, Narouz is conscious that she does not love him, and he is willing to settle for pity: "When you are in love you know that love is a beggar, shameless as a beggar; and the responses of merely human pity can console one where love is absent by a false travesty of an imagined happiness" (645). But a travesty of love is unacceptable, and so Clea does not arrive in time. Unrequited love is uncontrollable, but it is also unsatisfactory and can offer no chance of happiness, not even a falsified happiness.

Relationships based on prostitution are also doomed to failure as the example of Melissa shows. Melissa's affairs are based on a combination of financial need and compassion. In addition to her unnamed clients, Melissa has affairs of varying length with Darley, Pursewarden, Cohen, and Nessim, by whom she has a child. She loves Darley, but he is too immature to recognize the value of her love. She does what she can for him, to the extent of discharging a debt he owes Capodistria by having sex with him. Melissa is presented as a kind and generous woman, but because of what happens to Melissa, the underlying message is that selling oneself is wrong. Melissa sells or gives so much of herself and gets so little in return that she cannot survive, and after she gives birth she does not live long.

In _Justine_ Darley writes about loving Melissa, but we must remember that he is writing in retrospect. When he is involved with Melissa, he does not treat her well at all: he has an affair with Justine. He reflects, "In some paradoxical way it was Justine who was now permitting me to see Melissa as she really was--and to recognize my love for her" (46). But the love Darley says he feels for Melissa is not acted upon: he is too consumed by Justine.

Pursewarden's one night with Melissa brings him to his decision to commit suicide. After a night in which they enjoy each other "wisely and tenderly" (534), Pursewarden learns from Melissa that Nessim is involved in arms smuggling. Although "it was as if the whole city had crashed down about his ears" (535), he still remembers to give Melissa the money he promised her. The next night he kills himself.

Melissa's affair with Nessim is more destructive to her than to him. She becomes pregnant and is too ill to undergo an abortion. She bears the child, but Nessim has nothing to do with her and after Melissa dies, Nessim tries to get the child adopted. Balthazar says, "'He thinks Justine will never come back to him as long as he has Melissa's child'" (188). He goes on to say , "'I look at it this way: by one of those fearful displacements of which only love seems capable the child Justine lost was given back by Nessim not to her but to Melissa'" (188). By the end of the Quartet the child (whom Darley says will be called Justine) is reunited with her father and with Justine. Melissa provides a gift of life to Justine who has lost her own child.

Melissa offers peace and love to others but is never given them in return until it is too late. She exemplifies what Clea says about love near the end of _Justine_: "'Lovers are never equally matched--do you think?'" (193). She cannot form a lasting relationship with any of the men in her life because they do not see her as an equal. All the men make use of Melissa, or she makes use of them in her quest for security. She is overshadowed or pushed aside by everyone at some time. Darley views her as some kind of emotional backup or insurance and is angry when she dies: "The enormous vistas of the future which in all my vagueness I had nevertheless peopled with images of her had gone by default now; and it was only then that I realized to what an extent I had been nourishing myself on them" (187). But Darley's immaturity does not allow him to consider what he can do for Melissa--only what she means to him. Two men act selflessly toward Melissa: Cohen and Pursewarden. But each one dies almost immediately after. Melissa's own death is necessary for the growth of Darley. Ultimately Melissa is treated by the author as she is by many of the characters: as a means to an end. Given the hopelessness of her situation because of the lack of sensitivity of those around her, there is little else for her to do but die.

The fate of the victims of unrequited love and prostitution shows clearly that a positive, life-enhancing love relationship must be based on equality and mutuality. If it is not, happiness is not possible because the element of wholeness is lacking.

Part Four: Adultery

Just as homosexuality , incest, unrequited love, and prostitution lead to unhappiness, disconnection, and incompletion, so do adulterous relationships in the Quartet. The main example of an adulterous couple is Justine and Darley, but there are others: Justine and Pursewarden, Pombal and Fosca, Leila and Mountolive, and

Melissa and Nessim. Purswarden, Fosca, and Melissa all die prematurely. Leila, Nessim, and Justine are all maimed: Leila's beauty is destroyed by smallpox, Nessim loses an eye and a finger, and Justine suffers a stroke that paralyzes part of her face. Darley, Pombal, and Mountolive are not harmed physically, but they do suffer emotionally. The reasons for and circumstances of these deaths and devastations are various, but there is one common denominator: all are involved in adultery and deception.

Pombal's desire to return to his "'farmhouse in Normandy heart-whole'" (24) is thwarted when he falls in love with Fosca, a young, married, pregnant woman whose husband is off at war. Pombal reforms his previous behaviour of engaging in numerous affairs by becoming faithful to Fosca even though they have not had sex. His fidelity causes him concern because it is not something he has chosen: he simply does not want to have sex with another woman.

When Pombal tells Darley about Fosca's husband (a British officer who married her because she was a refugee), he is not critical of the man, but he does expose the problem in the marriage. He says, "'But when they are together you feel in the presence of something incomplete, something which is not cemented but just soldered together by good manners and convention'" (684). The implication is that Fosca and Pombal form a complete entity although their union is not physical at this point.

Sex becomes part of their lives when they learn that Fosca's husband has been taken prisoner. They realize that they have been waiting for him to be killed, and now that he is relatively safe, their plans must change. Pombal tells Darley, "'in trying to console her I slipped and we began to make real love without noticing it'" (780-1). Fosca becomes upset because they have "cheapened" (781) their love. However a few hours of reflection change her mind, and Pombal and Fosca decide to carry on their affair both mentally and physically with the goal of eventually telling Fosca's husband and then being together forever. Their happiness is brief: one day while they are sailing, Fosca is shot by a sentry on a battleship.

It is too simplistic to say that Fosca dies because she is unfaithful, but the actions of characters and their fortunes have some correlation. Fosca is another in a list of characters who suffer because their love relationships are flawed. Alan Warren Friedman points out:

> The blinding of Oedipus or of Gloucester, for instance, is clearly an objective correlative for spiritual blindness; the impotence of Jake Barnes or of Clifford Chatterley tells us something of the spiritual crippling caused by modern war and its aftermath, on the one hand, and by dehumanized technology, on the other. Disease or injury strikes, at one time or another, virtually every important character in Durrell's Quartet, and it invariably symbolizes some major aspect of the personality it strikes. (Lawrence Durrell and the Alexandria Quartet 50)

In the Quartet many characters suffer or die because of an accident: Fosca's death is an example. But it is true, as Friedman says, that what happens to a character often is the result of what kind of person the character is. The Quartet's long list of the injured and dead has a correlation to the various characters' thoughts and actions regarding love.

Leila and Mountolive are another couple who have an adulterous affair, but theirs is unlike that of Fosca and Pombal's in that Faltaus, Leila's husband, knows about the affair and condones it. Faltaus is much older than his wife and believes that she needs a younger man in her life. Faltaus' sophisticated veneer cracks, however, when he realizes that Leila loves Mountolive, that the affair is not merely physical. In his despair he contemplates suicide. His pain is caused by his plans going awry: instead of being a diversion, Mountolive takes the place of prominence in Leila's life.

Mountolive and Leila provide another example for Clea's belief that couples are not equal. When they begin their affair, Leila is the older, wiser, more experienced, better educated, and more cultured of the two. She educates Mountolive intellectually, emotionally, and sexually. To a great degree, the affair of Leila and Mountolive is heightened in its passion because of its finiteness: Mountolive spends the summer at the Hosnani estate, returns to London, and is then posted to Prague.

He does not see Leila for many years until he becomes the Ambassador to Egypt.

Leila and Mountolive maintain a close and frequent correspondence in which their positions change: he becomes the instructor. This relationship is described in pejorative terms by the third person narrator of Mountolive: "This was Leila's parody of love, a flirtation of minds, in which the roles were now reversed; for she was deprived of the riches of Europe and she fed upon his long letters and parcels of books with the double gluttony" (431). Leila welcomes the separation from her lover because she can "be free to possess Mountolive as she wished--greedily in her mind" (430). And she realizes that her hold on him will last longer if they are apart.

When Faltaus dies, Leila entertains the notion of going to Europe. She writes to Mountolive to see whether he is agreeable to her joining him. But before she can leave, in fact before Mountolive can reply, she is afflicted with smallpox and her face is horribly scarred. She decides to live out her life at Karm and becomes thankful for the veil, a garment she once thought restricted her, but one that now gives her some freedom.

When Leila finally does see Mountolive, her physical humiliation becomes complete: he is repulsed by her age and ugliness. To him she is a "pitiable grotesque" (620) no longer the woman whom he has thought about for decades.

> He suddenly realized that the precious

> image which had inhabited his heart for so long had now been dissolved, completely wiped out! He was suddenly face to face with the meaning of love and time. They had lost forever the power to fecundate each other's minds! He felt only self-pity and disgust where he should have felt love! And these feelings were simply not permissible. (621)

It is significant that Mountolive makes the leap from physical revulsion to mental incompatibility. Up to the point where he says they have lost "the power to fecundate each other's minds" (621), all he has concentrated on is Leila's appearance, the sound of her voice, and her smell. It is these sensory details, not an intellectual disagreement, that lead Mountolive to realize that he no longer loves her. Once again the message is clear: love is both mental and physical, and it cannot survive if one of these aspects is missing.

Both Nessim and Justine have adulterous affairs, and both suffer a similar disfigurement. When Darley returns to Alexandria to bring the child to Nessim, he discovers that Nessim has lost an eye and a finger in an air-raid. He has also lost much of his freedom and position in the country. Justine is confined to Karm, and she, too, has suffered a physical blow. A stroke has paralyzed her left eyelid, causing it to droop and "threatening to transform her expression into something like a leer" (688). It is significant that both Justine and Nessim are harmed in the organ of sight: they have been morally blind, and now their physical sight is impaired. In contrast Darley no longer wears glasses. He discovers on the island that he no longer needs them. Darley gains better physical sight as he gains a grasp on the truth and a moral vision.[9] These changes can be related to the characters' views of love and their subsequent beliefs and behaviour.

Nessim has a conventional and negative view of love: it causes suffering. Like Pombal, Nessim phrases his thoughts in terms of the city. Darley writes: "I remember Nessim once saying . . . that Alexandria was the great winepress of love; those who emerged from it were the sick men, the solitaries, the prophets--I mean all who have been deeply wounded in their sex" (18). Given that most of the characters suffer because of sex if not love it is no wonder that by the end of the Quartet, nearly every main character has left the city, is making plans to do so, or has died.

Nessim and Justine suffer in their marriage to each other because of each other and because of the affairs each has. The reasons for the suffering stem from the basis for their marriage. Nessim marries Justine for two reasons: first, he believes he will be trusted by the Jews if he is married to one, and second, he loves her. She marries him for his wealth and power and for the fact that he wants "her partnership in allegiance to his ruling _daimon_" (552). Nessim's trust in Justine gives her substance. As she says, "'How did you know that I only exist for those who believe in me?'" (555).

It is this kind of togetherness that Darley first sees and admires in the couple.

> [T]hey seemed to me then to be the magnificent two-headed animal a marriage could be. Watching the benign warmth of the light in his eye I realized, as I recalled all the scandalous rumours about Justine, that whatever she had done had been done in a sense _for him_--even what was evil or harmful in the eyes of the world. Her love was like a skin in which he lay sewn like the infant Hercules; and her efforts to achieve herself had led her always towards, and not away from him. The world has no use for this sort of paradox I know; but it seemed to me then that Nessim knew and accepted her in a way impossible to explain to someone for whom love is still entangled with the qualities of possessiveness. (33)

Darley believes that love helps to create a person, that through Nessim's love Justine can "achieve herself." But Darley does not yet understand that Justine must be herself in order to be capable of love. Darley also has no idea of Nessim's political intrigue and his attraction to danger. When Justine agrees to marry Nessim he thinks: "He had conquered her in offering her a married life which was both a pretence and yet at the same time informed by a purpose which might lead them both to _death_! This was all that sex could mean to her now! How thrilling, sexually thrilling, was the expectation of their death!" (558). This delight in sex and death is an ironic parody of the more usual delight in sex and life.

The possibility that Justine will gain self-knowledge through her marriage to him is not a consideration for Nessim. In contrast to Darley, Nessim believes that Justine enables others to achieve self-knowledge:

> " . . . I thought Justine great, in a sort of way. There are forms of greatness, you know, which when not applied in art or religion make havoc of ordinary life. Her gift was misapplied in being directed towards love. Certainly she was bad in many ways, but they were all small ways. Nor can I say that she harmed nobody. But those she harmed most she made fruitful. She expelled people from their old selves. It was bound to hurt and many mistook the nature of the pain she inflicted. Not I." (33)

The people Justine harms the most are those who love her: Arnauti, Nessim, Darley, and Clea. It is instructive that all four see her as something out of the ordinary. Nessim thinks she is "'great'" (33); Arnauti describes her as a "'lovely statue which was unable to return the kisses of the common flesh which it touches'" (112); Clea calls her a "'true whore'" (68) and a "'demoniac'" (109), and she says that Justine "'verges on the Goddess'" (68); Darley says she is "the victim of truly heroic doubts" (23). Justine does not remain with any of these lovers. In fact the one person she appears intrigued by is the one who resists her and who makes derogatory remarks about her: Pursewarden.

Justine's attraction to Pursewarden, who spurns her, is the result of her belief that love and life are solitary pursuits. Love is basically narcissistic for Justine, and it is appropriate that she is often associated with mirrors. Sitting before a dressmaker's mirror, Justine comments: "'Look! Five different pictures of the same subject. Now if I wrote I would try for a multi-dimensional effect in character, a sort of prism-sightedness. Why should not people show more than one profile at a time?'" (28). Justine is well able to present herself as multi-dimensional, but she is presenting an effect, an image.[10] For example, she manages to make Darley believe that their love is mental not physical. Darley believes they have shared thoughts: "It was, if you like, the flirtation of minds prematurely exhausted by experience which seemed so much more dangerous than a love founded in sexual attraction" (28). But Darley does not understand Justine or her motivations at all. Nor is he consistent: he admires Nessim's love for Justine because it is not possessive and yet he can write of his own bond with Justine, "'This is a peculiar type of love for I do not feel that I possess her--nor indeed would wish to do so'" (155). Darley must clarify his view of love, and he must realize the limitations of Justine's.

At the time of his affair with Justine, Darley believes she is in love with him. And he, like other characters, believes that love causes pain. He also sees this pain as necessary and beneficial. In reflecting on Nessim and Justine, he says:

> I think often, and never without a certain fear, of Nessim's love for Justine. What could be more comprehen-

> sive, more surely founded in itself? It coloured his unhappiness with a kind of ecstacy, the joyful wounds which you'd think to meet in saints and not in mere lovers. (19)

Darley makes Nessim sound like a Christ figure, suffering necessary wounds for the attainment of a higher joy. This statement of Darley's is important for two reasons: it shows his belief that love causes suffering, and it shows a connection between love and religion. But Darley exists in a godless world and finds no solace in religion. He tries to make love a guiding principle as he does with art. The lack of a god as an ordering principle means that the Platonic conception of love loses its foundation. For Plato the lack of a god was not an issue, and love was seen as a means of bringing men and gods closer. When Durrell refers to Eros, he does so with the handicap of not having an ontological system himself. In The Contemporary English Novel Frederick R. Karl touches on this aspect of Durrell's work:

> Durrell . . . is solidly within an English tradition first suggested by Fielding and later stressed by Dickens which sees in the flowering of emotions a way of building a secular metaphysics; and which, conversely, sees in reason the villain who will stifle and smother all life. Ulysses as well as Lawrence's major novels, especially The Rainbow and Women in Love, brought the tradition to a climax. . . (59-60)

Karl's comment that Durrell is in the tradition of those who are attempting to formulate a "secular metaphysics" is apt, I think.[11] In many ways Durrell is like Darley, who says, "Somewhere in the heart of experience there is an order and a coherence which we might surprise if we were attentive enough, loving enough, or patient enough. Will there be time?" (178). In a strictly mortal world, time is crucial.

Immortality and love are addressed in a key speech in the Symposium. Socrates recounts Diotima's view of love and its role in achieving immortality. Diotima says that one can achieve a kind of immortality through one's children or one's work--poetry or laws left to future generations. But the best form of immortality is that found in the search for beauty, beauty of the soul not the body. Diotima says:

> But if it were given to man to gaze on beauty's very self--unsullied, unalloyed, and freed from the mortal taint that haunts the frailer loveliness of flesh and blood--if, I say, it were given to man to see the heavenly beauty face to face, would you call his . . . an unenviable life, whose eyes had been opened to the vision, and who had gazed upon it in true contemplation until it had become his own forever?
>
> And remember . . . that it is only when he discerns beauty itself through what makes it visible that a man will be quickened with the true, and not the seeming, virtue--for it is virtue's self that quickens him, not virtue's semblance. And when he has brought forth and reared this perfect virtue, he shall be called the friend of god, and if it is ever given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him. (563)

Without a deity the characters in the Quartet are thrown back on the two human ways of striving for immortality:

creation of children or creation of art. Only those characters who aspire to either one of these goals or both of them have a chance for happiness. The connection between love and death is a strong one, as Rollo May points out in Love and Will: "*Love is not only enriched by our sense of mortality but constituted by it*. Love is the cross-fertilization of mortality and immortality. This is why the daimon Eros is described as midway between gods and men and partakes of both" (102). In the Quartet the couple with the greatest chance for the greatest happiness is Darley and Clea whose bid for immortality is based on two forms of creativity stemming from the sexual impulse and the artistic one.

Justine's view of love is different from her husband's. It also militates against possible happiness because, as reported by Arnauti, Justine does not view love as shared experience, only simultaneous experience:

> Idle . . . to imagine falling in love as a correspondence of minds, of thoughts; it is a simultaneous firing of two spirits engaged in the autonomous act of growing up. And the sensation is of something having noiselessly exploded inside each of them. Around this event, dazed and preoccupied, the lover moves, examining his or her experience; her gratitude alone, stretching away towards a mysterious donor, creates the illusion that she communicates with her fellow, but this is false. The loved object is simply one that has shared an experience at the same moment of time, narcissistically; and the desire to be near the beloved object is at first not due to the idea of possessing it, but

> simply to let the two experiences compare themselves, like reflections in different mirrors. All this may precede the first look, kiss, or touch; precede ambition, pride or envy; precede the first declarations which mark the turning point--for from here love degenerates into habit, possession, and back to loneliness. (46-7)

Life for Justine is a series of brief respites from her loneliness. But even the respites are not shared experiences of love. She cannot imagine people being other than separate and distinct. She tells Darley, "'love admits of no honesty by its very nature'" (693). She goes on to say, "'We are after all totally ignorant of one another, presenting selected fictions to each other!'" (693). For Justine love cannot exist because there is no connection possible between people.

Through the outcomes of the various relationships in the Quartet, Durrell suggests that real love is possible only for two people, one male and one female, who are self-aware, honest, and kind. In the Quartet nearly all of the couples crumble because these conditions are not met. At the end of the Quartet, the only couples with any hope for the future are Mountolive and Liza, Amaril and Semira, and possibly Darley and Clea. And all three couples have endured a great deal of suffering. Justine and Nessim are reunited but the attraction is not healthy love: it is an attraction based on power. Justine has succeeded in taming the odious Memlik, whom she is leading "along like a poodle" (876). And Nessim has regained financial and political clout. The two are back at their schemes and their passion is renewed. They have not changed. As Lee Lemon points out, "there is a terrible sense of loss of potential when we discover that, despite all Nessim (and Justine) have been through, at the end of *Clea* he is picking up where he left off . . . " (*Portraits of the Artist in Contemporary Fiction* 20). Justine and Nessim are together, but they are not exemplary as a couple because they are deficient as human beings. They neither learn nor change. Their suffering does not affect them.

What all the broken couples illustrate is the hollowness of mistaken or misplaced love. Darley understands a little of what love should be when he says of his and Justine's feeling for each other, "We were only foolishly concerned lest we might not be able to share it--lest it might separate us! In this plain courting of martyrdom I realized that we showed our love at its hollowest, its most defective" (122). It is the sense of separation, of absence and emptiness, that corrupts love. The three couples who do offer a sense of potential for coompletion and happiness are Mountolive and Liza, Amaril and Semira, and Darley and Clea.

Part Five: Beneficial Love

The three couples who offer examples of beneficial love--Mountolive and Liza, Amaril and Semira, and Darley and Clea--have certain important aspects in common. They all have passion, they are honest with each other, they have suffered, and to some extent, they have helped each other. It is quite possible to see these couples as embodying the qualities of love that Paul proposes:

> Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things. (1 Cor. 13, 4-7)

Hope is the key word for all three of these couples: hope eradicates the pain of the past and makes the future appear to be positive. However, although these three relationships have many qualities in common, these couples are not equal in terms of their exemplary value. Only Darley and Clea are presented as true models, and even they do not offer a complete entity. What they offer is possibility.

Amaril and Semira are the most traditional of the three couples who experience beneficial love. They adopt traditional male-female roles. Amaril, a doctor, makes a nose for Semira, who has avoided society because of her deformity. As Clea says, "'You see, he is after all building a woman of his own fancy, a face to a husband's own specifications; only Pygmalion had such a chance before!'" (515). Not only does Amaril fashion Semira's face, but also he fashions her career. It is significant that Semira's work is a diminution of her husband's: she becomes a doll surgeon.

This couple is not an exemplary one because of the inequality in their mental capacities. Although it is clear that they are happy and we are led to believe that they will continue to be, they are not what all couples should be. Clea calls their love "'Romantic Love with capital letters'" (722) and remarks that Amaril is not bothered by the difference in their education nor by the fact that Semira is "'simple-minded'" (722). Semira is like Galatea, a creation of a man who loves her not for herself but for the role he plays in bringing her to life. Amaril designs his wife, they love each other, and at the end of _Clea_ they are expecting a baby, but they are not admired or envied. They are seen more as curiosities.

Liza and Mountolive are also seen as curiosities to a great extent. Because of his position as the Ambassador, Mountolive is not close to anyone, except Liza. Their relationship has grown slowly over several years, and they are on much more equal intellectual footing than Amaril and Semira. And passion is also present in their relationship. But there is an odd sense of isolation with Liza and Mountolive that is created by his career and her blindness. They are not full participants in life the way Darley and Clea have learned to be.

Of the three couples who present beneficial love, only Darley and Clea are models because they are the only ones who appear to be fully human. The situations of Amaril and Semira and Liza and Mountolive are too peculiar to be emulated. It must be noted, however, that Darley and Clea are not together at the end of the Quartet: there is simply a very strong suggestion that they will come together, having matured as separate individuals.

Beneficial love is possible but difficult according to the Quartet. One critic has taken this difficulty to mean that love is not possible. Louis Fraiberg comments, "Through seemingly countless demonstrations it is made clear that, in the _Quartet_, love is self-love and furthermore that it is a failure" (20). Durrell's point seems more to be that self-love is necessary before the love of another is possible and that love between individuals is difficult. Although the Quartet is filled with failed relationships, there is no indication that failure must occur, only that it frequently does.

Beneficial love has very clear strictures: it takes place between heterosexuals who have suffered and who through passion, honesty, and kindness form a complete entity ready to face the world. Of the three couples who achieve the possibility of togetherness and happiness, only Darley and Clea are vibrant individually. The reason is that both are artists.

In her letter at the end of the Quartet, Clea tells Darley about her new mechanical hand and how it can paint. She is freed from her block and says, "'I have crossed the border and entered into the possession of my kingdom, thanks to the Hand'" (874). She makes a similar comment about Darley: "'As for you, wise one, I have a feeling that you too perhaps have stepped across the threshold into the kingdom of your imagination, to take possession of it once and for all'" (877). The possibility of love between Darley and Clea is strengthed by their individual achievements in writing and painting. As Anna Lillios says, "The ending of the Quartet, therefore, is really a beginning for Darley and Clea, as lovers and as artists" (14). Nothing has been completed or fixed: Darley and Clea have suffered, have learned to be honest with each other, have shown each other kindness, have shared passion and are at the end of the Quartet beginning their lives. It is no accident that Darley compares starting to write to giving birth: he is giving birth in the artistic sense and in the personal one. The lack of closure at the end of the fourth novel illustrates that love and life are time-bound. Leaving Clea's hospital room, Darley remembers a line of Pursewarden: "'The richest love is that which submits to the arbitration of time'" (856). Thus we cannot draw any conclusions about what happens to Darley and Clea. We know that they have gained the necessities for beneficial love and that there is a great deal of hope, but Durrell ends the novels without attempting to present what it appears he thinks he cannot: a complete, healthy love. Such an entity is still an act of the imagination.

Critical commentary on the Quartet as an investigation of modern love is highly various. For example, Gerald Goldberg says, "As an exploration of love, 'bi-sexual Eros' or otherwise, the novels are jejune--as profound as a penny dreadful" (388). V. S. Pritchett says:

> And are [the characters] talking about love? Not really; only about Narcissism and desire. Sterile, they are talking about its perversity, its sadness, its anecdotage, its variety, its passing. Their sexual love is easy, but after the sexual act there is still unsatisfied desire. Exhausted romantics, they are looking over the sleeping lover's shoulder. Love--and Mr Durrell as a good Mediterranean prides himself on his knowledge of its variety--rarely grows beyond that first stage in his novels. ("Alexandrian Hothouse" 33)

After having read the first two novels of the Quartet, John Mortimer says, "[a]lthough there is a good deal of copulation of various sorts we do not feel we are learning much about love" (84). In contrast to these voices that concentrate on the sexual dimensions of the novels are those of critics such as Julian Hartt who says:

> Durrell seems to have gone to great pains to say that love is the terrible baptism through which the spirit has access to true freedom and power. Some do not survive the ordeal; and others have not the wherewithal--the life, the courage--to rise to it. But whatever one's theology the fact must be faced: a few make it into the creative kingdom, and many do not. (67)

What I have shown, I believe, is that for Durrell love and sex are very closely related, so closely related that the most valued form of love is that which includes sex. As Clea says, "Sexual love is knowledge" (739).

Chapter Three

The Quartet as an Experiment in Form

In addition to the attention garnered by Durrell's statement about modern love, the Quartet has received much attention for its form. Durrell has said that he was trying to create a new form, and in explaining his theory of reality, he uses the discoveries of Einstein and Freud:

> Einstein torpedoed the old Victorian material universe--in other words, the view of matter--and Freud torpedoed the idea of the stable ego so that personality began to diffuse. Thus in the concept of the space-time continuum you've got an absolutely new concept of what reality might be, do you see? Well, this novel is a four dimensional dance, a relativity poem. (Mitchell 279)

Several critics have commented on Durrell's apparent confusion regarding the theory of relativity,[12] but as Lee Lemon points out:

> How precisely Durrell understood either Freud or Einstein is one of those interesting questions that misses the point; what Durrell certainly understands, and what it is greatly more important for an artist to understand, is the effects of their discoveries on human beings. (Portraits of the Artist in Contemporary Fiction 3)

The effect of the theories of Freud and Einstein helps form the basis of the thematic and formal concerns of the Quartet.

In the Quartet Durrell attempts to make the narrative structure reflect relativity. In particular, personality appears to change depending on the temporal and spatial perspective of the observer. And as a consequence of the different perceptions of personality, love also appears as unstable, discontinuous, and illusory. Like their characters and actions, the novels are not fixed, closed entities. In the Preface to the Quartet Durrell says that the workpoints at the end of three of the four novels suggest other lines of development and "that even if the group of books were extended indefinitely the result would never become *roman fleuve*." Thus the Quartet could be extended infinitely without being rigorously subject to the chronological narrative structures of works such as Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Snow's *Strangers and Brothers*, or Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time*.

Three of the four books of the Quartet are written from the point of view of Darley. *Justine* is his attempt to understand the affair he has with Justine and the effects it has on him and those around him. *Balthazar* is another view of Darley and his circle of friends, but it has information added by Darley's friend Balthazar. Sometimes in this novel Darley filters Balthazar's information and presents it in the first person point of view from his own stance; other times he simply quotes Balthazar's notes. *Clea*, the final novel, introduces the future, and it is written with Darley as narrator. *Mountolive*, the third novel, has a third person narrator. All the novels make use of various narrative devices: letters, diary entries, other novels, conversation, and reported conversation. Only Clea moves the plot forward in time from the events related in Justine. Balthazar and Mountolive present different perspectives on the events in the first novel, and in doing so they offer different perspectives on love and sex.

The importance of time to narrative cannot be ignored, and much has been said about the treatment of time in the Quartet, both by Durrell and others. In a 1962 Preface to the Quartet, Durrell says:

> In trying to work out my form I adopted, as a rough analogy, the relativity proposition. The first three [novels] were related in an intercalary fashion, being "siblings" of each other and not "sequels"; only the last novel was intended to be a true sequel and to unleash the time dimension. The whole was intended as a challenge to the serial form of the conventional novel: the time-saturated novel of the day.

In his theoretical underpinnings for the Quartet, Durrell shows his intention to get away from the conventional treatment of time in the novel--the chronological sequence of episodes. How successful he is at this is limited by the fact that the novel is, to a great extent, time-bound. Even though Durrell attempts to defy closure, for example with his work-points at the end of three of the novels, plot is an essential part of a novel because a novel is essentially narrative. Actions, whether interior as in thought or exterior as in committing murder, happen in and over time. As Paul Ricouer says in Time and Narrative:

> what is ultimately at stake in the case of the structural identity of the narrative function as well as in that of the truth claim of every narrative work, is the temporal character of human experience. The world unfolded by every narrative work is always a temporal world. Or . . . time becomes human to the extent that it is organized after the manner of narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of this temporal existence. (3)

Or as Georg Lukács says in The Theory of the Novel, "we might almost say that the inner action of the novel is nothing but a struggle against the power of time" (122). Peter Brooks in Reading for the Plot argues in a similar vein:

> Narrative is one of the large categories or systems of understanding that we use in our negotiations with reality, specifically, in the case of narrative, with the problem of temporality: man's time-boundedness, his consciousness of existence within the limits of mortality. And plot is the principal ordering force of those meanings that we try to wrest from human temporality. (xi)

Without plot, however minimal, the piece of writing is no longer narrative but lyric and is out of time. The novel cannot escape being "time-saturated," whatever the length of time covered in it. For example, Joyce's Ulysses covers twenty-four hours; Woolf's The Waves covers about sixty years. Novel sequences, for example, Proust's, Snow's, and Powell's, frequently follow the lifespan of the main character. Or the novel sequence follows a portion of a character's life as in the examples of Olivia Manning's

Balkan and Levant trilogies, which present the early years of the marriage of Guy and Harriet Pringle, and Joyce Cary's trilogy about Gulley Jimson.

Because narrative deals with the ordering of human temporality, conceptions of death cannot be ignored. How death is viewed has an effect on how time and love are perceived. Durrell has said that we need to be concerned with death, that we need to situate it in our lives:

> We have, so to speak, chloroformed the idea of death in ourselves and try to think of it as little as possible. This, say the mystics, leads to a grave loss of reality. We can only fully enjoy every second of life to the extent that we are able to come to terms with death--to situate it in the present! I take this to mean that we would realize the intimate connection of life with death and thus unburden ourselves of the unconscious fears that poison our living. ("I wish . . ." 59)

The acceptance of death as a natural consequence of life is necessary according to Durrell so that life can be made stronger and more vibrant. A recognition of the finality of death changes the way people view life and can encourage creativity, whether it is the creation of works of art or progeny. In the Quartet the creative impulse that is emphasised is the artistic, in particular the creation of texts. Several characters are writers: Mountolive Sr., Keats, Arnauti, Pursewarden, and Darley.

In his writing Darley looks for an underlying principle of order in the world: "Somewhere in the heart of experience there is an order and a coherence which we wounds, it provides a useful function in the creation of art. Darley says: "For us artists there awaits the joyous compromise through art with all that wounded or defeated us in real life; in this way, not to evade destiny, as the ordinary people try to do, but to fulfill it in its true potential--the imagination" (20). Darley learns that there is no underlying framework of order in the world and that the imagination is the means by which order is provided or imposed. He is mistaken about many of the events recounted in _Justine_, and although he attempts to impose order on his thoughts, the implication is strong that he cannot because he does not know the truth--either of what happened or how to perceive it.

How the actions in the novels are perceived--by the reader and by Darley--depends on the narrative point of view and the differentiation between subject and object. For three of the novels, Darley is the narrator and the main character: therefore, he is both the subject and the object. In the other, Darley is restricted to being an object as there is an omniscient narrator.

The use of different narrative points of view is not Durrell's invention, and various critics are negative about Durrell's use of mutiple perspectives. R. T. Chapman compares Durrell's Quartet unfavourably to the works of Proust, but he fails to see that, as Nancy Lewis puts it:

> [t]he problem for Proust . . . is to recover the indelible image which has been detached from the flux. For

> Durrell, however, the indelible image is precisely what does not exist. . . . Reality instead is made by continuous intercalation, by continuous interaction among human beings and between the past and the present. (9)

Chapman also prefers Faulkner to Durrell, saying that in the case of Faulkner the synthesis is done by the reader in _The Sound and the Fury_ but that in the Quartet it is done by Darley.[13] This point does not take into account the fact that Darley is not the narrator of _Mountolive_, and therefore he cannot synthesise this material: only the reader can.

Chapman also objects to the omniscient narrator of _Mountolive_ because such a narrative stance does not fit in with how he perceives the overall plan of the Quartet:

> Such a world of shifting values obviously precludes omniscience, and hence the Omniscient Narrator who, like a God, could see into the heart of things, has no place in Durrell's scheme. _Mountolive_ illustrates the limitations of such a factual, omniscient narration. (411)

Durrell's purpose in the narration in _Mountolive_ is exactly what Chapman says. Durrell is showing the impossibility of objective narration. Objective truth is an illusion because a changed perspective can offer a variation in what was formerly seen as fixed.

Another negative comment regarding the narration of the Quartet is made by Anthony Burgess, who says:

> It does not seem to me that there is anything really original in this technique; in an ordinary novel--dignified by none of Durrell's

> theorizing--we make similar discoveries about people and events, the final discovery coming at the end. (*The Novel Now: A Guide to Contemporary Fiction* 96)

The comments of Chapman and Burgess, while both negative, are diametrically opposed: Chapman dislikes the omniscient narrator because that kind of narrator presupposes a fixed or knowable reality, which Durrell appears to indicate does not exist. Burgess believes the Quartet is no different from other novels in terms of its slow revelation of a particular knowable reality. Stephen Wall agrees with Burgess in seeing the Quartet as no different from other novels in which the question of relativity does not arise:

> This tendency [to uncover motivations] in the *Quartet* conflicts with what a fully rigorous application of the relativity proposition would surely imply; its characters do in the end assume the kind of recognizable personality that Durrell has suggested is an illusion. (269)

Chapman, Burgess, and Wall have missed the point about Durrell's use of the relativity principle. In his discussion of Durrell, Charles I. Glicksberg explains the effect of the theory on modern literature:

> The ontological crisis brought on by Einstein's theory of relativity is variously reflected in the body of modern fiction. No character of any depth is today untouched by the plague of doubt; no belief is without its counterpointed dialectic of unbelief. The intellectual hero is stripped of all convictions; there are no absolutes; the truth eludes him. The "destructive element" which Conrad

> refers to in _Lord Jim_ is now seen to be the river of time. The fact that human life is measured out in time introduces a problematical factor in fiction. Each point of view is justified in its own right. There is no Olympian eye which can view the confused panorama of action from a single vantage point. (95)

Darley writes _Justine_ when he is untouched by doubt, but once he reads Balthazar's interlinear, he realizes his folly in believing what appears to be true. _Justine_ can be seen as Darley's thesis on love. He is then confronted with Balthazar's antithesis. Durrell then breaks the standard pattern of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, by having _Mountolive_ narrated by an omniscient narrator. Darley is not responsible for the synthesis: the reader is. With the projection into the future with _Clea_, Darley finally puts together his own synthesis, but the novel does not (and cannot) end with a sense of finality. It ends with the suggestion of possibilities, of Darley and Clea meeting in France, continuing to love each other, and continuing their respective artistic endeavours.

Thus, the reader of the Quartet is in many ways like Darley: a constructor or synthesiser of the text, but the reader has one more novel to synthesise than Darley does. In writing his texts, Darley does what the reader eventually has to: question and shift his perspective to match new information. In discussing reader-response theory, Wallace Martin says:

> When a perspective on life proves inadequate, the reader tends to

> question the entire repertoire of conventional assumptions on which it is based. In [Wolfgang] Iser's view, narration progresses as a negation of partial and inadequate ways of understanding the world, leaving in its wake not a constructed meaning but a variety of hypothetical viewpoints, depending on how the reader has filled in meanings, questioned social practices, and tried to find positive alternatives to the inadequate views represented in the text. (162)

Darley's task is thus twofold. First he reads Balthazar's commentary on his text, which is itself an exposition of his life. Secondly, after reading a reconstructed view of his life, Darley tries to put the pieces together: what he knew and felt, and what he knows and feels. He reads Balthazar's interlinear, which is a commentary on his text, itself a commentary on his life. After reading a reconstructed view of his life, Darley tries to put the pieces together: the pieces of what he knew and felt, and the pieces of what he knows and feels. But even though Darley learns, for example, that Justine did not love him, there is no erasure of the feeling that she did. Nancy Lewis offers a helpful quotation from Ortega y Gasset who says, "In the physics of Einstein our knowledge is absolute; it is reality that is relative" (4).

Because of the relative nature of reality, it is important to examine the narrative method of each of the novels of the Quartet to see how the various realities are presented. This examination shows Durrell's concern with the formal challenges of the novelist as outlined by Georg

Lukács:

> We have already recognized the dangers that arise from the fundamentally abstract nature of the novel: the risk of overlapping into lyricism or drama, the risk of narrowing reality so that the world becomes an idyll, the risk of sinking to the level of mere entertainment literature. These dangers can be resisted only by positing the fragile and incomplete nature of the world as ultimate reality: by recognising, consciously and consistently, everything that points outside and beyond the confines of the world. (71)

The four novels of the Quartet are a compelling testimony to "the fragile and incomplete nature of the world as ultimate reality." The fragility and lack of completion come from the changing reality that results from a shift in space or time.

Part One:

Justine as a Microcosm of the Quartet

In its narrative structure, _Justine_ is a small scale version of what Durrell does in the entire Quartet. The narration in this novel is fragmented and varied: the reader is given information in many ways, including letters, excerpts from other novels and diaries, and remembered conversations. Individual events may be reported chronologically, but often they are reported as they became important to Darley, not as they happened. Carl Bode says that "the _Quartet_ is like a collage, a splendid, surrealist paste-up of written materials" (220). Bode would have been accurate if he had said that the

Quartet was like a kaleidoscope rather than a collage. Any movement shifts the way the pieces fall together. *Justine* contains the fragments of a kaleidoscope, and it introduces many of the narrative techniques that Durrell employs in the whole Quartet.

Justine is divided into four parts with workpoints and notes at the end, and in style it is the most lyrical novel of the Quartet. At the beginning, Darley gives his reason for escaping from Alexandria to a small Greek island: "I have had to come so far away from it in order to understand it all!" (17). Darley attempts to understand his experience by describing it in fragments. In addition to the four-part structure of the novel, he separates each part into smaller passages, some as brief as a paragraph. Each passage is like a piece of the coloured glass found in the end of a kaleidoscope.

Part I is the most fragmented of the four parts. The chronology of past events is difficult but not impossible to discern. Darley is clear from the beginning of *Justine* that he is creating a particular reality and that in doing so he is fulfilling the role of the artist:

> The solace of such work as I do with brain and heart lies in this--that only *there*, in the silences of the painter or the writer can reality be reordered, reworked and made to show its significant side. Our common actions in reality are simply the sackcloth covering which hides the cloth-of-gold--the meaning of the pattern. For us artists there awaits the joyous compromise through art with all that

> wounded or defeated us in daily life; in this way, not to evade destiny, as the ordinary people try to do, but to fulfill it in its true potential--the imagination. (20)

Darley has not yet realized that although the meaning of the pattern may not change, there are infinite patterns. In this first fragmentary part of his life pattern, Darley concentrates on his relationship with Justine and quotes extensively from Moeurs, the novel written by Justine's first husband, Arnauti.

Moeurs is similar to Justine: it is "a diary of Alexandrian life as seen by a foreigner in the early thirties. The author of the novel is engaged on research for a novel he proposes to do" (58). Darley is writing a few years later, but his method is similar to Arnauti's, he is a foreigner, and his content is exactly the same: Justine. He even begins to think of himself as stepping out of the pages of Arnauti's novel, and he certainly sees the similarity of his and Arnauti's positions:

> Indeed so fascinating did I find his analysis of his subject, and so closely did our relationship echo the relationship he had enjoyed with Justine that at times I too felt like some paper character out of Moeurs. Moreover, here I am, attempting to do the same sort of thing with her in words--though I lack his ability and have no pretensions to being an artist. I want to put things down simply and crudely, without style--the plaster and whitewash; for the portrait of Justine should be rough-cast, with the honest stonework of the predicament showing through. (73)

Darley's comment that he is not an artist contradicts his earlier comments, and what he says in this quotation also contradicts his notion that he wants to get at the content of Justine without being concerned with the form. He has an idea of how she should be presented. Although he is an immature writer, he does understand the importance of form and content.

The simplicity and crudeness of form that Darley says he desires is constantly undercut by what he does. The fragmentation and disruption of time in _Justine_ is not haphazard. Instead it is calculated so that the reader gains an understanding of Darley's experiences as he does. The different time frames are carefully placed to reflect different realities. For example, when Darley introduces a character, he frequently shifts from the past to the present tense, even though the actions are clearly in the past. He uses the immediacy of the present tense to transport the reader into the past to make it the present, as in his first description of Justine:

> Under the palms, in a deep alcove, sit a couple of old men playing chess. Justine has stopped to watch them. She knows nothing of the game, but the aura of stillness and concentration which brims the alcove fascinates her. She stands there between the deaf players and the world of music for a long time, as if uncertain into which to plunge. (23)

He also describes his friends in the present tense when he is talking about qualities they still, as far as he knows, possess. Pombal "is a rare figure" (23), Capodistria "is more of a goblin than a man" (33), and Mnemjian "is the Memory man" (36). The manipulation of verb tense indicates Darley's interest in situating events in time and in his consciousness.

Part II of Justine is less fragmented than Part I. The passages are longer and tend to be chronologically narrated in themselves. Darley describes Balthazar and the Cabal, Cohen's death, Pursewarden, Scobie, and Clea, and as always, Justine. He is also self-consciously writing his novel. Midway through this second part, Darley breaks in and comments on the effect the island is having on his will:

> As a poet of the historic consciousness I suppose I am bound to see landscape as a field dominated by human wish . . . Now, however, I am beginning to believe that the wish is inherited from the site; that man depends for the furniture of the will upon his location in place. (95)

This new view reminds him of Arnauti's comment on the psyche: "For the writer people as psychologies are finished. The contemporary psyche has exploded like a soap-bubble under the investigations of the mystagogues, What now remains to the writer?" (95). Arnauti's comment is similar to Durrell's comment that Freud disintegrated the "old stable ego" as Lawrence described it. In a letter to Edward Garnett, Lawrence explains what he means:

> I have a different attitude to my characters . . . I don't care so much what the woman feels. .·. . That presumes an ego to feel with. I only care for what the woman is. . . . You

> mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognizable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover--states of the same radically unchanged element. (The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence 281-2)

Lawrence's rejection of the stability of the ego is taken up by Durrell in the Quartet. Durrell mirrors the instability of the ego in his fragmented and discontinuous narrative.

The beginning of Part III of Justine shows clearly not only Darley and Justine's belief that it is Nessim who nearly catches them together in bed but also Darley's belief that Justine loves him. While lying in bed one afternoon, Justine and Darley see a figure come to the door and then turn away. They believe they are safe from Nessim because they are listening to him speak on the radio in Cairo. But they discover that the broadcast was taped. Darley imagines that Nessim does not come into the room because of fear, fear based on the knowledge that "Justine was really falling in love at last" (124). Both beliefs are later shown to be false. Reality shifts.

Part III of Justine is also similar to the third novel of the Quartet, the omnisciently narrated Mountolive, in that it has a passage of what appears to be Darley pretending to be an omniscient narrator. The passage extends for almost five pages and is concerned with Nessim's feelings about Justine and the madness he experiences. As the narrator, Darley explains that what he is doing is reporting Nessim's dreams and feelings.

> At this time he had already begun to experience that great cycle of historical dreams which now replaced the dreams of his childhood . . . These disturbed him for they were not the dreams of the night-hours. They overlapped reality and interrupted his waking mind as if the membrane of his consciousness had been suddenly torn in places to admit them.
>
> Side by side with these giant constructions . . . there came sharper and sharper attacks of unreasoning hatred against the very Justine he had so seldom known, the comforting friend and devoted lover. (143)

But the reader must question how Darley knows this material. He breaks into the apparently omniscient narrative to comment:

> I mean: he had beaten Justine, beaten her until his arm ached and the stick broke in his hands. All this was a dream of course. Nevertheless on waking he had found his whole arm aching and swollen. What could one believe when reality mocked the imagination by its performance? (147)

The curious narration itself mocks the imagination and makes belief suspect. Durrell is playing a game with the reader. He is breaking down narrative boundaries to reflect the fragmentation of ego.

Darley's artistic difficulty is shown in *Justine* through his view of personality. He says he has failed in three realms: "in art, in religion, and in people" (159). His failure in art is attributed to his lack of belief "in the discrete human personality" (159). He adds, "I lacked a belief in the true authenticity of people in order to successfully portray them" (159). Darley's belief at this point is counter to Lawrence's that there is something fundamental in human beings. Although the ego may not be consistent, just as reality is not consistent, there is some undefinable unchanging presence.

This presence is described by Durrell in A Key to Modern British Poetry. Chapter Four, "Beyond the Ego?", contains Durrell's thoughts on Freud and Groddeck:

> For Freud, as indeed for the civilization of which he was both representative and part, the ego is paramount. It was a box which Freud's ingenuity divided and subdivided into component parts as every new discovery came to light. Groddeck considered the ego a mere mask which deluded the human being into thinking he was responsible for what he was. (74)

> In all the marvellous pages of Freud we see the analytical intellect pursuing its chain of cause-and-effect; if only the last link can be reached, if only the first cause can be established, the whole pattern will become clear. Freud believed that science could reach that cause by thought and experiment. To Groddeck such a proposition was false. The Whole was an unknown, a forever unknowable entity whose functions and shadows we are. (75)

Groddeck, as Durrell notes, is indebted to Freud, but Durrell believes that Groddeck goes further in his positing of the "It"--"[t]he sum total of an individual human being, physical, mental and spiritual" (74). Durrell says, "Groddeck's ego-It polarity is a brilliant rationalization of the Eastern mystic's position--who seeks to free himself from the opposites of being, and to emerge into Reality" (83). What Durrell perceives as Groddeck's accomplishment is what he himself is trying to do in his fiction.

The last section of Part III of Justine is a description of Nessim's annual duck shoot at Lake Mareotis. Again, as he does earlier in describing his friends, Darley uses the present tense to give the passage a strong air of immediacy. Past and present are merged: in his attempt to understand his past, Darley makes it the present. The collapsing of time frames is important to his growth and to his understanding of himself. When he says at the end of this section of Justine that "[s]omewhere in the heart of experience there is an order and a coherence which we might surprise if we were attentive enough, loving enough, or patient enough. Will there be time?" (178), he shows that he has not discovered yet what Groddeck believes: that the basis of personality is unknowable, that at the heart of experience lies mystery.

Part IV of Justine tells of the disappearance of Justine, Darley's move to Upper Egypt, and Melissa's death. Near the end is a long letter from Clea to Darley in which she talks about time and personality in ways similar to those of Darley. She writes:

> "I suppose events are simply a sort of annotation of our feelings--the one might be deduced from the other. Time carries us (boldly imagining that we are discrete egos modelling our own

> personal futures)--time carries us forward by the momentum of those feelings inside us of which we are the least conscious." (192)

Time has carried Darley and Melissa's child to a small Greek island where Darley is writing his book and the child is acting as editor or censor by randomly destroying pages of the manuscript. Darley questions the reality of the people he has put in his pages: "I wonder whether these pages record the actions of real human beings; or whether this is not simply the story of a few inanimate objects . . . " (195). He decides to stay on the island alone, leaving Clea's letter unanswered.

As a writer, Darley is beginning to hone his craft by the end of the novel. He not only questions his reality, but also manipulates it. He finishes the novel with two tricks. The first is a footnote to the following page, which is blank; the second is to end with an ellipsis. He then includes workpoints--suggestions for new directions for the narrative--and notes.

The structure and ending of _Justine_ defy any sense of closure: Darley could go back and insert material at any point. He could include more quotations from the works he has quoted: Pursewarden's and Arnauti's novels, for example. He could introduce entirely new material as he suggests in the workpoints. But _Justine_ is not without structure and shape. Its concerns: love and artistic creation, to name only two, firmly fix it out of the genre of the _nouveau roman_ and save it from the sterility of that type of novel. In his article "Durrell's French Reputation," Victor Brombert says the _nouveau roman_ is

> in rebellion against the intellectual and politically conscious generation of Malraux which, it was felt, had devitalized the novel by transmuting all experience into an abstraction. The work of Michel Butor, Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute . . . marks a concerted and almost surgical effort to rid literature of the "impure" elements of psychological analysis, social problems and moral predication. Yet the _roman nouveau_ [sic], with its compulsive experimentation and its dehumanized wasteland, was quickly moving toward another type of aridity. (176)

The Quartet escapes the aridity of the _nouveau roman_ because Durrell's experimentation is not for experiment's sake but is in the service of his thematic and artistic concerns which have to do with the nature of existence and knowing. Thus Durrell can use many of the techniques of experimental fiction: shifting narration, fragmentation and convolution of time frames, proliferation of meanings and realities while maintaining "psychological analysis, social problems and moral predication" and a discernible plot.

Part Two:

Balthazar as the First Twist of the Kaleidoscope

Of the two epigraphs from de Sade at the beginning of _Balthazar_, the first is the more important and suggests the formal concerns of this novel: "The mirror sees the man as beautiful, the mirror loves the man; another mirror sees the man as frightful and hates him; and it is always the same being who produces the impressions" (208). The second novel in the Quartet is a compilation of Balthazar's commentary on Darley's Justine and Darley's integration of the conflicting realities he is faced with. Darley says at the beginning of this novel that when he wrote the first one, "the full facts were not at my disposal. The picture I drew was a provisional one . . ." (210). Balthazar is Darley's attempt to set straight the record of his experience.

Darley is still in search of an underlying order and truth in reality even though he is beginning to see its capriciousness. He quotes Pursewarden, as he often does in this novel, showing himself as the deferential, younger, and less experienced writer:

> "We live" writes Pursewarden somewhere "lives based upon selected fictions. Our view of reality is conditioned by our position in space and time--not by our personalities as we like to think. Thus every interpretation of reality is based upon a unique position. Two paces east or west and the whole picture is changed." Something of this order.
>
> And as for human characters, whether real or invented, there are no such animals. Each psyche is really an ant-hill of opposing predispositions. Personality as something with fixed attributes is an illusion--but a necessary illusion if we are to love! (210)

Darley's understanding that life is a "selected fiction" is aided by Balthazar's interlinear to Justine:

> It was cross-hatched, crabbed, starred with questions and answers in different

> coloured inks, in typescript. It seemed to me then to be somehow symbolic of the very reality we had shared--a palimpsest upon which each of us had left his or her individual traces, layer by layer. (215)

With the interlinear Darley writes the second novel of the Quartet, correcting the version of reality given in the first, and illustrating Balthazar's dictum: "'Truth is what most contradicts itself in time'" (216).

The major correction to reality is the new determination of whom Justine loved. Darley thought she loved him, but Balthazar informs him that she loved Pursewarden and was merely using Darley to cover up her affair. With this shocking news Darley plunges himself once more into the past and tries to create it anew as if all the events were happening for the first time. But Darley cannot help being self-conscious, and he comments on the difficulty of his work:

> How am I to make this comprehensible when I can only visualize these scenes with such difficulty? I must, it seems, try to see a new Justine, a new Pursewarden, a new Clea. . . . [ellipsis in text] I mean that I must try and strip the opaque membrane which stands between me and the reality of their actions--and which I suppose is composed of my own limitations of vision and temperament. My envy for Pursewarden, my passion for Justine, my pity for Melissa. Distorting mirrors, all of them. . . . [ellipsis in text] The way is through fact. I must record what more I know and attempt to render it comprehensible or plausible to myself, if necessary, by an act of the imagination. (221)

Darley is beginning to see the function of the imagination in the elucidation of reality, but he still thinks that facts are unchanging. He is still caught up in the belief that if he digs deep enough he will know the truth.

Balthazar is divided into many sections. There are four major divisions with fourteen smaller sections. The divisions are confusing and can be seen as a mistake or as reflecting the difficulty Darley has in integrating his friend's material. At the beginning of the third small section Darley says: "Somehow, then, the problem is just how to introject this new and disturbing material into (under?) the skin of the old without changing or irremediably damaging the contours of my subjects or the solution in which I see them move" (234). Instead of reworking all of Balthazar's material, Darley frequently inserts long passages of it into his own narrative.

There are passages in *Balthazar* similar to those in *Justine* in which the identity of the narrator is not clear. For example, Section IV is concerned with Nessim's visit to Karm to tell his brother and mother of his plans for marriage. The point of view appears to be that of an omniscient narrator, someone in possession of not only the facts of the visit but also the feelings of Nessim and Narouz. Logically it is possible for Nessim to have told Balthazar all about the visit, but Narouz keeps his feelings to himself.

At the beginning of Section V Darley offers an explanation of the previous section's narrator:

> So much have I reconstructed from the labyrinth of notes which Balthazar has left me. "To imagine is not necessarily to invent" he says elsewhere, "nor dare one make a claim for omniscience in interpreting people's actions. One assumes that they have grown out of their feelings as leaves grow out of a branch. But can one work backwards, deducing the one form from the other? Perhaps a writer could if he were sufficiently brave to cement these apparent gaps in our actions with interpretations of his own to bind them together? . . . " (275)

Darley has taken Balthazar's implied challenge to be a brave writer and to fill in the gaps of knowledge. And Darley has gone one better by adopting the stance of an omniscient narrator and pretending to know what goes on in a character's mind.

In addition to learning that Justine did not love him, Darley also learns that Capodistria was likely not the person who was killed at the duck shoot. This information is given midway through the novel, and its underlying message is conveyed by Balthazar's saying "'Fact is unstable by its very nature. . . . How then can we hunt for the truth?'" (278). In the next part of the novel, Darley abandons his search for the truth by stopping his integration of his view of reality and Balthazar's. He simply gives Balthazar's account of events. It is significant that this long passage is about Pursewarden, Darley's unknown and unwilling rival for Justine and an accomplished writer. Darley has not gained enough distance from Pursewarden to be able to deal with him directly; therefore, Balthazar's interlinear is quoted directly.

A few pages later the interlinear is again quoted directly, and again the subject is Pursewarden. The lesson of the relative nature of reality is reiterated, along with Pursewarden's thoughts on the psyche: "'I regard [the psyche] as completely unsubstantial as a rainbow--it only coheres into identifiable states and attributes when attention is focussed on it. The truest form of right attention is of course love'" (306). Darley's negative feelings toward Pursewarden make it impossible for him at this point to use his own words in writing about his former rival, so he uses Balthazar's. Darley's failure to understand Pursewarden is pointed out by Balthazar as being the result of Darley's failure to love him:

> "I won't say that you have been less than just to him--only that he does not seem to resurrect on paper into a recognizable image of the man I knew. He seems to be sort of an enigma to you. (It is not enough, perhaps, to respect a man's genius--one must love him a little, no?)" (281)

Darley's respect for Pursewarden has already been demonstrated by his copying of one of Pursewarden's narrative tricks. When Darley at the end of _Justine_ refers the reader to a blank page, he is imitating Pursewarden, who wrote in one of his novels: "'I refer the reader to a blank page in order to throw him back upon his own resources--which is where every reader ultimately belongs'" (307). In his growth as a writer, Darley has two lessons to learn from Pursewarden. The older writer offers him artistic commentary and the chance to learn sympathy for a fellow human being. Art and love are not separable--each suffers in isolation. When Darley can begin to love and appreciate Pursewarden, he begins to be a better writer.

Another incident in _Justine_ that Darley misunderstood and which Balthazar corrects is the coupling of a prostitute and a man Darley thought was Mnemjian. After reading the interlinear, Darley thinks the man was Narouz. Balthazar also informs Darley of the manner of Scobie's death. Certainly not everything that happens in the Quartet is suspect: although some characters who appear to die do not, for example, Capodistria; others are definitely dead, for example, Scobie and Pursewarden.

Balthazar is very much concerned with the process of writing. In addition to the comments of Pursewarden, Darley is given suggestions by Balthazar:

> "I suppose (writes Balthazar) that if you wished somehow to incorporate all I am telling you into your own Justine manuscript now, you would find yourself with a curious sort of book--the story would be told, so to speak, in layers. Unwittingly I may have supplied you with a form, something out of the way! Not unlike Pursewarden's idea of a series of novels with 'sliding panels' as he called them. Or else, like some medieval palimpsest where different sorts of truth are thrown down, one upon the other, the one obliterating or perhaps supplanting another." (338)

Essentially Balthazar has supplied Darley with a form for interconnected or intercalated novels, but Darley has already developed the form of the sliding panels or palimpsest for Justine.

In Balthazar Darley begins to see how important the whole process of learning the various realities is to his self-knowledge. Balthazar writes, "'To intercalate realities . . . is the only way to be faithful to Time, for at every moment in Time the possibilities are endless in their multiplicity'" (370). To rework reality is also the way for Darley, a creature of time, to find, as he says, "the germ and substance of a truth--time's usufruct--which, if I can accommodate it, will carry me a little further in what is really a search for my proper self" (370). The search in this novel takes him to the same place as it did in the first: to Clea.

Like Justine, Balthazar ends with a letter from Clea, in which she encloses a letter from Pursewarden who writes about Darley's future fame. Although Pursewarden mocks Darley by calling him "Lineaments" (380),[14] he does take Darley seriously as having the potential to be a writer. Clea's letter explains the connection for her between love and art. She tells Darley about a young painter she met whom she considered falling in love with. But his paintings showed "weakness and poverty of heart and a power to do mischief" (382), so she left him. The juxtaposition of this incident and Pursewarden's letter is important to the overall form and theme of the Quartet: the congruence of love and art. Darley must come to terms with his feelings about Pursewarden before he can start fulfilling his potential as a writer and before he is worthy of the love of Clea.

Part Three:

Mountolive as the Second Twist

Like the other novels of the Quartet, *Mountolive* begins with two epigraphs, the second of which is from Stendhal: "*Il faut que le roman raconte*" (396). This third novel is more straightforward in its storytelling than the other three.[15] It has a third person omniscient narrator, and the events are related chronologically in sixteen sections with the use of flashbacks. Regarding the subject of love and the switch in narrative focus at *Mountolive*, Durrell said, "It was simply a shift from subjective to objective. *Mountolive* is an account of the thing by an invisible narrator, as opposed to somebody engaged in the action" (Mitchell 276). He told Henry Miller: "This novel is as tame and naturalistic in *form* as a Hardy; yet it is the fulcrum of the quartet and the rationale of the whole thing" (*A Private Correspondence* 327). This novel, as its title indicates, focusses on David Mountolive. There is little mention of Darley, but the subject remains love.

Alan Friedman points out that

> it would be a mistake to equate Durrell's use of "subjective" with "false" or "inaccurate" and "objective" with

> "true" or "accurate," and consequently to read _Mountolive_ as the "key" to the _Quartet_ in the sense that a legend specifically and unequivocally explains all the symbolic shorthand contained in a map. (112)

The third novel of the Quartet offers another view of reality, a view that is determined to a great extent by politics--the ordering of public life. Thus it is fitting that this novel concentrates on Mountolive, a diplomat who for years has suppressed his private life in favour of his public position.

Just as _Balthazar_ reveals new truths, so does _Mountolive_, and often these new revelations demonstrate the power of public life over private life. For example, in _Justine_, Darley and Justine think that Nessim is at the door and close to discovering them together in bed. The problem is a personal one: Darley fears the discovery of their affair. In the third novel there is a long letter from Pursewarden to Mountolive in which the writer reveals that it was not Nessim at the door but Maskelyne, the Brigadier-General, who has come to sneak a look at Nessim's safe. He leaves when he hears Justine's and Darley's voices. Maskelyne's presence is for political reasons: he is looking for evidence of the Hosnani plot.

Other examples show the dominance of public life over the private. But it must be noted that the importance of these incidents and their causes in the public or private sphere are relative and subject to interpretation. Motivations in _Mountolive_ are usually seen as being public because of the political nature of the novel. For example, when Leila refuses to see Mountolive, he believes she is too shy to confront him because of her ravaged face. Nessim says the reason is the arms plot: "it has alarmed her to understand the full extent of our plans. Also it has made her relationship with Mountolive much harder. I think that is the reason she refused to see him at the Carnival meeting, remember?" (562). One of the most important examples of this split between private and public motivation is the explanation of Pursewarden's suicide. As I argued in the previous chapter, there is no reason why Pursewarden has to kill himself for one specific cause: it may be the combination of public and private motivations that pushes him to such a drastic action.

But the most important examples of public versus private motivations are Justine's affairs with Darley and Pursewarden. In _Justine_ Darley thinks she loves him, but in _Balthazar_ we are told that she really loved Pursewarden and was using Darley to cover her tracks. In _Mountolive_ a completely new perspective is offered. The affairs appear to be politically motivated. Justine, with Nessim's approval, becomes involved with the two Englishmen in the hopes of discovering what, if anything, they know about the arms plot.

The very marriage of Nessim and Justine is presented as being politically motivated. He tells her: "I am visualizing a relationship far closer in a way than anything passion could invent--a bond of a common belief" (552). She understands his proposal as asking "for her partnership in allegiance to his ruling daimon" (552). And she is intensely excited by his offer:

> This was a Faustian compact he was offering her. There was something more surprising: for the first time she felt desire stir within her, in the loins of that discarded, pre-empted body which she regarded as only a pleasure-seeker, a mirror-reference to reality. There came over her an unexpected lust to sleep with him--no, with his plans, his dreams, his obsessions, his money, his death! It was as if she had only now understood the nature of the love he was offering her; it was his all, his only treasure, this pitiable political design so long and so tormentingly matured in his heart that it had forced out every other impulse or wish. (554)

Nessim's obsession is compelling to Justine and offers an identity and a way of life. His single-mindedness gives her life direction, and the inherent danger makes the endeavour more enticing to her. This view of Justine is a long way from Darley's first presentation of her as a spoiled society wife.

There is another forceful example of how politics governs human behaviour. In Balthazar and Justine, there are descriptions of Nessim's mental instability. Darley and Balthazar think it is caused by jealousy, "a jealousy," writes Darley, "all the more terrible and indeed dangerous for never allowing itself any outlet" (Balthazar 277). In the first novel Darley thinks he is the cause of the jealousy; in the second, he thinks Pursewarden is. But an entirely new reason is offered for Nessim's madness in Mountolive. Nessim tells Justine:

> "I simply must tell you why I have been acting so strangely. I cannot bear the strain any longer. Justine, I have been brought face to face with another problem. I am faced with the terrible possibility of having to do away with Narouz. That is why I have been feeling half-mad. He has got completely out of hand. And I don't know what to do." (564-5)

The fact that Nessim contemplates fratricide shows his obsession with his arms plot, and the contemplation is surpassed in horror only by the actual killing of his brother. The political motivation is seen in this novel as overruling the personal. Nessim is willing to kill his only brother in order that his political plot be kept safe. Mary Graham Lund says that in this novel "all love, all pain, seem subservient to the political struggle" ("Submerge . . . " 233). This view is correct, I think, but it must be kept in mind that the key figures in Mountolive--Mountolive, Nessim, and Justine--have defined themselves as political beings. The artists in the Quartet--Darley, Pursewarden, Arnauti, and Clea--have mainly faded into the background. Pursewarden has some prominence in this novel but less as a writer than as a civil servant. Thus Mountolive can be seen as the novel in the Quartet in which the main characters derive their personalities from sources outside themselves. In the other three novels the struggles are internal.

For Mountolive, Nessim, and Justine, it is the surface of life that is important. Justine actually tells her husband that she is constituted of surface. When he says, "If only we did not have to keep acting a part" (581), she replies, "Then I should not know who I was" (581). This sense of role playing infuses Mountolive and Nessim also although they have an inner substance, unlike Justine.

When Mountolive meets Nessim, "he instantly recognized in him a person of his own kind, a person whose life was a code" (409). Ironically the two men are at the opposite ends of the political spectrum in Egypt. But they can maintain a veneer of friendship and civility because of necessity. Nessim must seem to be nothing more than an influential banker. Thus when Mountolive sees him in a restaurant in Berlin, Nessim lies and says that the men he is dining with are in tungsten. Mountolive's dinner companion, the Chargé d'Affaires, mentions that they are from Krupps, the armaments manufacturers.

As a diplomat, Mountolive must lead a very prescribed life. This sort of life agrees with his personality though, as can be seen by the fact that when he is in the midst of his affair with Leila, he never writes anything personal in his journal: "it was always data which concerned the country, for he did not dare to put down a single word about his feelings or so much as record even

Leila's name" (414). Mountolive is aware of the effect his profession has on him. In addition to teaching him never to criticise aloud, it gave him "something like a long Jesuitical training in self-deception which enabled him to present an ever more highly polished surface to the world without deepening his human experience" (433). The surface finally crumbles when Mountolive "goes native" and ends up in the house of child prostitutes. This experience combined with Mountolive's love for Liza Pursewarden proves that Mountolive is capable of an inner life.

Justine and Nessim are exemplars of Mountolive Senior's belief that "work itself is Love" (467). Nessim's obsession with the plot gives him all he needs to survive. It is in Clea when he appears to be powerless that he is diminished and Justine, who derives her being from him and the plot, feels she does not love him.

The method of narration in Mountolive--the third person omniscient point of view--is appropriate to delineate the development of characters who are superficial in the sense that their inner lives are controlled by their outer reality. None of the three is creative: Mountolive is concerned with maintaining the status quo while Justine and Nessim are interested in destroying it. Only Mountolive becomes aware that he needs to nourish his inner life, and when Liza comes into his life, he is afforded the opportunity to nurture a part of his personality that was nearly destroyed: the capacity to love. Appropriately, *Mountolive* ends not with David Mountolive, who will escape the path of destruction, but with the murder of Narouz, a murder commissioned by his brother for purely political reasons. *Mountolive* is a testimony to the damaging power of ignoring or lacking an inner life, and this knowledge is outside the characters. Therefore none of them can tell the story.

Part Four:

Clea as the Re-working of the Wheel of Time

With *Clea* the Quartet returns to Darley's first person narrative, but this fourth novel does not shift its spatial perception as do *Balthazar* and *Mountolive* in relation to *Justine*. Instead it, as Durrell says in the Preface to the Quartet, "unleash[es] the time dimension." *Clea* is divided into ten chapters of varying length, and the first chapter is sub-divided into five smaller sections. The action is given chronologically: Darley returns to Alexandria from his island while the war is on and resumes his friendships. He catches up with what has happened while he has been gone, and the narrative style of this novel reflects the diminishing of the confusion he felt in the first two novels. Darley writes: "it seemed that past and present had joined again without any divisions in it, and that all my memories and impressions had ordered themselves into one complete pattern" (723). The smooth flow of time and thought in *Clea* reflects the new found pattern that Darley has synthesised from his experiences.[16]

Darley's concern with artistic creation is a main theme of this novel, particularly because it appears that he has stopped writing. On his arrival in Egypt he visits Balthazar, who asks him about his writing. Darley's reply explains the problems he is facing:

> "It has stopped. I don't seem to be able to carry it any further for the moment. I somehow can't match the truth to the illusions which are necessary to art without the gap showing--you know, like an unbasted seam. I was thinking about it at Karm, confronted by Justine. Thinking how despite the actual falsities of the manuscript which I sent you the portrait was somehow poetically true--psychographically if you like. But an artist who can't solder the elements together falls short somewhere. I'm on the wrong track." (708)

Balthazar's points out that Darley's view can be freeing, and he suggests that it can offer a narrative form:

> "In fact this very discovery should encourage rather than hamper you. I mean about the mutability of all truth. Each fact can have a thousand motivations, all equally valid, and each fact a thousand faces. So many truths which have little to do with fact! Your duty is to hunt them down. At each moment of time all mutiplicity waits at your elbow. Why, Darley, this should thrill you and give your writing the curves of a pregnant woman." (708)

Clea is Darley's discovery of the truth of Balthazar's words. By the end of the novel he is ready to begin writing. He ends the novel with a beginning: the beginning of his career as a writer:

> Yes, one day I found myself writing down with trembling fingers the four words (four letters! four faces!) with which every story-teller since the world began has staked his slender claim to the attention of his fellow-men. Words which presage simply the old story of an artist coming of age. I wrote: "Once upon a time. . . . " [ellipsis in text]
>
> And I felt as if the whole universe had given me a nudge! (877)

Balthazar sets off Darley's development as a writer with his interlinear and his encouragement, and two other characters play a crucial role in Darley's artistic maturation: Pursewarden and Clea.

Pursewarden has a great influence on Darley because he is an acclaimed writer, and he sees Darley as a writer also. At the beginning of Clea Darley thinks of himself as being constituted by writing: "All the writing which I had borrowed from the living and the dead, until I myself had become a sort of postscript to a letter which was never ended, never posted" (657). But Darley has worn himself out on his island, trying to "re-work reality" (657). He realizes that "it is reality which works and reworks us on its slow wheel" (657). Darley's failure to understand the nature of reality prevents him from writing: he is unable to create a fictional reality.

Darley still thinks of himself as in the process of becoming a writer, and one step in this process is his return to Alexandria, "in order to be able to leave it forever, to shed it" (659). His desire to come to grips with the force of the city combines with his desire to realize himself as a writer, and both processes involve the effect of time:

> If I have spoken of time it is because the writer I was becoming was learning at last to inhabit those deserted spaces which time misses--beginning to live between the ticks of the clock, so to speak. The continuous present, which is the real history of that collective anecdote, the human mind; when the past is dead and the future represented only by desire and fear, what of that adventive moment which can't be measured, can't be dismissed? For most of us the so-called Present is snatched away like some sumptuous repast, conjured up by fairies--before one can touch a mouthful. Like the dead Pursewarden I hoped I might soon be truthfully able to say: "I do not write for those who have never asked themselves this question: 'at what point does real life begin?'" (659-660)

Darley's respect for Pursewarden shows that he is overcoming his former envy and is able to learn the lessons of the more experienced writer. It is noteworthy that not only is Darley concerned with time, but also that he is cognisant of how this concern is changed over time. One example is his attitude to the past and specifically to Pursewarden. Nessim says, "Let the past remain a closed book for us all" (664), and in effect this suggestion is followed. Clea marches forward in time, showing Darley's artistic and emotional growth through his relationships with Pursewarden and Clea.

Both Balthazar and Pursewarden suggest a new novel form to Darley. Balthazar's idea is implied in his discussion of the mutability of truth while Pursewarden's is couched in more specific terms. In Chapter III, "My Conversations with Brother Ass," extracts from Pursewarden's notebooks, Pursewarden tells Darley:

> No, but seriously, if you wished to be--I do not say original but merely contemporary--you might try a four-card trick in the form of a novel; passing a common axis through four stories, say, and dedicating each to one of the winds of heaven. A continuum, forsooth, embodying not a *temps retrouvé* but a *temps délivré*. The curvature of space itself would give you stereoscopic narrative, while human personality seen across a continuum would perhaps become prismatic? Who can say? I throw the idea out. I can imagine a form which, if satisfied, might raise in human terms the problems of causality or indeterminacy. . . . [ellipsis in text] And nothing very *recherché* either. Just an ordinary Girl Meets Boy story. But tackled in this way you would not, like most of your contemporaries, be drowsily cutting along a dotted line! (757-8)

In addition to offering Darley a form, Pursewarden also offers him a subject and theme: "Our topic, Brother Ass, is always the same--I spell the word for you: l-o-v-e. Four letters, each letter a volume! The *point faible* of the human psyche . . . " (754). Pursewarden's form and subject dovetail in the number "four," and this congruence shows the inseparability of form and content.

Pursewarden's comments are also very close to Durrell's on the subject of the novel and give credence to the view that Pursewarden is partially Durrell. According to Durrell, he is both Pursewarden and Darley:

> I have two doubles--Darley and

> Pursewarden. Pursewarden is my artist, and, as such, must be an ironist; Darley is my neophyte. I do not agree with all they say, but they are me; if a character is "real," then his opinions and sayings are part of his make-up, and have nothing to do with the author. Pursewarden is my favourite; I live in the hope of reforming him. I could kick Darley for being so Anglo-Saxon and stupid, but he is also me and I can do nothing about it. ("Lawrence Durrell: An Exclusive Interview" 63)

Darley clearly receives many of his ideas from Pursewarden (who happens to admire D. H. Lawrence). Pursewarden writes:

> The sexual and creative energy go hand in hand. . . . They ride the spiral of time together. They embrace the whole of the human motive. The truth is only to be found in our own entrails--the truth of Time. . . .
>
> How wonderful the death struggle of Lawrence: to realize his sexual nature fully, to break free from the manacles of the Old Testament. . . (762)

> Art is the purifying factor merely. It predicates nothing. . . . Try to tell yourself that its fundamental object was only to invoke the ultimate healing silence--and that the symbolism contained in form and pattern is only a frame of reference through which, as in a mirror, one may glimpse the idea of a universe at rest, a universe in love with itself. (763)

Pursewarden recognizes the impossibility of the task of the writer: art heals, but the disease is never eradicated. Compounding this problem is the view that personality is fragmentary and suspect, but that the writer must treat it as stable for certain periods of time in order to commit it to paper. The personality of the artist is even more difficult to deal with because as Pursewarden says, "I realized that to become an artist one must shed the whole complex of egotisms which led to the choice of self-expression as the only means of growth! This because it is impossible I call The Whole Joke!" (751-2). This whole chapter is filled with such advice to Darley, affectionately referred to as "Brother Ass." The label shows that Pursewarden acknowledges the similarity between the two men: the artistic struggle. Although Pursewarden is giving Darley advice, he does so with the tone that he is confident Darley will make a breakthrough and succeed where he has succeeded--in art, and where he has failed--in life.

Darley's chance for success in his personal life depends, to a great extent, on Clea, the other major influence on him. She also influences his artistic side, particularly when she hits him after he says he has "been meditating a book of criticism" (839). Clea's effect can be seen in the narrative arrangement of the fourth book. Chapter One is broken into five sections; the other chapters are not divided. It is at the end of Chapter One that Darley and Clea re-unite and make love while the city is being bombed. Darley describes their love-making as "a kind of challenge to the whirlwind outside. . . . And kisses themselves became charged with the deliberate affirmation which can come only from the foreknowledge and presence of death" (727). The war brings death to many people around Darley and Clea, but it is a swimming expedition that is nearly fatal for Clea, and it is Darley who saves her. Thus the couple are dependent on each other: Darley saves Clea's life by cutting her hand free when she is trapped underwater, and Clea saves Darley emotionally by being his partner in beneficial love. Clea also gives Darley Pursewarden's notebook, thereby enabling him to see the concern of the older writer.

Once Darley and Clea are together, the narration in the fourth novel follows a smooth path. But this is not to say that the narrative is totally conventional: Darley tries various narrative approaches. For example, in Chapter Two he uses a dramatic technique to indicate who is speaking. Instead of saying "she said" or "I said," Darley labels the words of the speakers with "I:" and "She:" (734-48). Then the whole third chapter contains the extracts from Pursewarden's notebooks. And as is common in the Quartet, letters are used to offer yet another perspective.

In addition to his specific comments on writng, Pursewarden makes general comments about life. One of his most important is the following: "the so-called act of living is really an act of the imagination" (772). In Clea with the help of his friends, Balthazar and Clea, and the dead Pursewarden's notes, Darley learns this lesson and is ready at the end to apply it to his life, which is the life of the writer.

The relationship between art and life is clarified for Darley when Liza gives him her brother's love letters to read so that Darley can determine whether or not they should be saved for the sake of literature or destroyed as Pursewarden wanted. Reading the intensely personal letters about the incestuous relationship between Liza and her brother, Darley comes to two realizations. The first is that Pursewarden's "irony was really tenderness turned inside out like a glove" (791), and the second is "that we artists form one of those pathetic human chains which human beings form to pass buckets of water up to a fire, or to bring in a lifeboat" (792). The greater importance of life over art is shown in Darley's decision to advise Liza to abide by her brother's wishes even though Darley is reduced to tears by the artistry of the letters.

By the end of _Clea_ Darley is able to begin writing again, and again he is away from Alexandria. Back on his island, he finds once again the distance necessary to create. He has also found a clear perspective on Pursewarden which he reveals in a letter to Clea in Chapter Ten, as well as an understanding and acceptance of his relationship to Clea. Darley's letter crosses with Clea's to him, a letter in which she announces the painting ability of her artificial hand. Like Darley she is planning to go to France to practice her new-found skill, and she believes that Darley has reached a new stage in his life also: "As for you, wise one, I have a feeling that you too have perhaps stepped across the threshold into the kingdom of your imagination, to take possession of it once and for all" (877). She closes her letter by describing herself as "a real human being, an artist at last" (877). She is right about Darley as we see: he has entered the kingdom of the imagination and so he begins to write.

Part Five:

The Quartet as a Mixture of the Old and the New

The self-consciousness of the experimentation in the Quartet and Durrell's own commentary cloud the issue of whether or not Durrell has developed a new novel form.[17] Critics are divided, but generally even those who do not believe that Durrell has done anything new acknowledge that he has made a contribution.[18] Charles Glicksberg says:

> In conclusion, it is hard to determine whether Durrell's work, judged as a whole, represents a brilliantly original attempt to project the fourth dimension in the universe of fiction or the melodrama of eroticism dressed up in the "plotted" garments of profundity. The positive achievement of his contribution is impressive enough: the past is viewed through a multiplicity of interrelated perspectives. (132)

Leon Edel in The Modern Psychological Novel says, "What Durrell achieves that is different from his predecessors is to make us aware of the presence of mirrors all around us, those actually on walls in rooms and barbershops, and those which we carry in our registering consciousness" (190). Edel takes the motif of the mirror to compare the Quartet to the *nouveau roman*: "Where the *nouveau roman* has carried fragmentation still further Durrell has kept his mirrors whole--and along the way devised many mirror-tricks" (191). Frederick Karl believes that Durrell has created a new novel form: "This attempt to create layers of reality which can be absorbed simultaneously is, as Durrell admits, not original, although the creation of this world through several 'simultaneous novels' is new" (44). Thus although *Justine* can be seen as a microcosm of the Quartet, the innovation comes from the creation of the other texts which are meant to be read along with it. As Chiara Briganti says, "writers like Durrell have shown how any discourse is not a closed system of meaning, but an active production of it" (7). Durrell compounds the proliferation of meanings by compounding the number of texts that must be synthesised by the reader.

Durrell's innovation may also be seen as the balance of narrative experimentation and story-telling. And in the Quartet the narrative form and the content complement one another. Lawrence Thornton points out:

> Thus the larger narrative movement from the sterility of *Justine* to the continuity of *Clea* involves a movement from isolation to connection, a movement from a world in which experience is a meaningless fragment of an equally meaningless whole, to a world in which patterns of continuity have emerged that can restore vitality

> and participate in the restoration of ethical and spiritual values. (6)

This development is possible within a single novel, but its effect is heightened when the development occurs through four--and theoretically many more--novels. Durrell's innovation is a matter of degree, then. He has stepped back from the direction of the *nouveau roman* or that of *Finnegans Wake* to re-incorporate narrative experimentation with plot. In a sense what Durrell's experimentation shows is that the novel must be limited in its experimentation: if it is not, it ceases to be a novel, a narrative structure that is by definition concerned with time, and it becomes a game.

In *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*, Linda Hutcheon uses the Quartet as an example of a self-reflexive work:

> Nevertheless, [the change in the conception of the relationship between words and things, idea and object], whatever its cause, would allow, in literary terms, for the transformation of form into content: the subject matter would change again from the novelist to his writing. Novels then begin to reflect and to reflect upon their own genesis and growth. The mirroring involved begins to undermine traditional realism in favour of a more introverted literary level of mimesis: *Point Counter Point*, *The Alexandria Quartet*, *Portrait d'un inconnu*. The realistic story trappings are finally reduced to an allegory of the functioning of the narration. (12)

Hutcheon believes that in postmodern literature the "life-art connection . . . is reforged, on a new level--on that of the imaginative process (of storytelling), instead of on that of the product (the story told)" (11). I think she goes too far in emphasising the separation of the process and product, and this emphasis results in her comment that the Quartet reduces the "realistic story trappings" to "an allegory of the narration." It is evident that Durrell is concerned with storytelling, but it is equally evident that he is concerned with the story. The process and product are not easily separable, as Hutcheon later points out.

Carl Dawson recognizes the balancing act that Durrell has done although he phrases his comments in slightly pejorative terms:

> For all Durrell's professions of having written an Einsteinian, relativistic novel, in fact the Quartet expresses an almost anachronistically traditional sense of art and life. Durrell is, like Samuel Beckett, sensitive to the "mess," to the "chaos," of modern life; but surely Beckett, far more than Durrell, illustrates the implications of Einsteinian physics systematically applied. Durrell believes too strongly in the efficacy of art, in its power to make whole, to shed light. (126)

Dawson's negativity comes from his view of the role of art, which is clearly not Durrell's. This problem is addressed by Steve Franklin:

> I certainly have no quarrel with those critics who see in Durrell's novel an attempt to embody an Einsteinian universe, but I do have a quarrel with critics who insist on seeing relativity merely as a means by which a writer can manipulate point of view and add perspectives. Anyone who has read

> *Nostromo*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, or *Ulysses* must realize that after the skillful manipulation of point of view and perspective in those modernist works, any further attempt to alter point of view might be rather old hat. I think the real value of Durrell's "Quartet" lies not merely in its multiple perspectives, but rather in the larger philosophical implications inherent in the work. If we accept the novel as being mimetic, providing a plausible and probable imitation of reality, a post-Einsteinian world will demand a new aesthetics. Marked by an interlocking of heretofore apparently distinct and separate modes of thought (the literary and the scientific), this aesthetics provides the imaginative means by which we can apprehend the continually expanding and evolving nature of literature in our own historical epoch as it embodies and reflects the expanding and evolving nature of human vision. (55)

Franklin raises an important point when he says "if we accept the novel as being mimetic." If we do not, then Durrell's accomplishment is diminished. But if we do accept the novel as being mimetic in offering to represent reality, and I think we must, then we must see Durrell's Quartet as contributing to the development of the novel. For if the novel is mimetic, it must be concerned with time and the nature of reality, if not directly, at least implicitly.

Chapter Four

Tunc and Nunquam: The Love Machine Rebels

Tunc (1968) and Nunquam (1970) together form The Revolt of Aphrodite, described by Durrell as a "two-part novel of the oldfashioned sort" (Postface to Nunquam). Although this novel is a departure in technique from the Quartet, according to Durrell, who decided "to do away with the descriptions of landscape, the set pieces, the purple passages" (Alyn 136-7), interest in many of the same themes and concerns is retained. Love is once again a central concern of this novel, and it is seen to be the way to gain self-knowledge. Love emerges as being more powerful and productive than the other main method of gaining knowledge in the novel--science.

The epigraph to Nunquam informs us that the titles of the two novels are from Petronius' The Satyricon: "Aut Tunc, aut Nunquam, It was then or never."[19] G.S. Fraser quotes the relevant passage from Petronius, which deals with the decay in society:

> "Nobody believes in heaven, see, nobody fasts, nobody gives a damn for the Almighty. No, people only bow their heads low to count their money. In the old days high-class ladies used to climb up the hill barefoot, their hair loose and their hearts pure, and ask God for rain. And he'd send it down in bucketsful right away--it was then or never--and people went home like drowned rats. Since we've given up religion the gods nowadays keep their feet well wrapped up. The fields just lie . . . " (150)

The allusion to Nero in the last sentence of Nunquam--"And we will keep on this way, dancing and dancing, even though Rome burn" (283)--suggests that the decay in society appears to be of such monumental proportions that it cannot be eradicated. But it is necessary to try. The characters with any chance for success and happiness are those who have freed themselves from the impulse to make money the new religion. The firm must be rejected because it develops from and encourages the worst in human behavior.

Carole Mablekos points out:

> This is Durrell's message: The age of technology and bureaucracy threatens a perversion of the human spirit that could surpass the excesses of the society that Petronius satirized. Unless we are willing to undergo a dangerous but necessary reaffirmation of free will--man's birthright--we are lost. The price of rebirth is the acceptance of the dangers of freedom. The Firm, metaphor for Culture, will always exist, but we must always have the possibility of escaping from it. Only then can we, like Felix and Benedicta, become the Happy and the Blessed. (53-54)

Felix and Benedicta finally embody the qualities suggested by their names, but a distinction must be made between their state of mind at the end of Nunquam and the state of existence they wish to achieve. As Mablekos says, they are "the Happy and the Blessed." This state of mind results from the decision to reject the firm and proclaim themselves free individuals. Whether or not they are free is another matter and depends on the outcome of the destruction of the files. The ending of Nunquam is deliberately ambiguous. As G.S. Fraser says, it "suggests at least the possibility of hope" (165). In this respect The Revolt of Aphrodite is like its predecessor, the Quartet, which also ends on a note of hope, albeit a strong one. Durrell's endings are not definitive; they are suggestive. What is definitive is that love is the key to a healthy psyche and happiness.

Of the titles of these two novels, Durrell has remarked, "What I wanted was to establish right from the start the two time scales of the narrative: then, which suggests the distortion of the imaginary, and now, which opens the way to reality" (Alyn 135). Durrell appears to be suggesting here that the past can only be imaginary--or perhaps imagined. The opening of the way to reality through the "now" is also attempted in narrative through a distortion of our perception of time, as Peter Brooks points out:

> If the past is to be read as present, it is a curious present that we know to be past in relation to a future we know to be already in place, already in wait for us to reach it. Perhaps we would do best to speak of the anticipation of retrospection as our chief tool in making sense of narrative, the master trope of its strange logic. (23)

It is precisely the logic of narrative that Durrell is exploring in his works, and in The Revolt of Aphrodite he investigates it through the recreation of a human being using memory as the basis of existence. The narrative form itself is not innovative because that is not the concern. Nor are the characters psychologically complex. Instead they are used to direct the question of what it means to be human to a consideration of the control of time or the arrangement of one's narrative.

The pivotal couple in The Revolt of Aphrodite is Charlock and Benedicta, who in Tunc are involved in a destructive relationship. Through suffering, they are redeemed and achieve happiness by the end of Nunquam. But they are the only couple to follow this path. The other main characters come to an unhappy end: Julian, Iolanthe, and the replica of Iolanthe. Minor characters are also unsuccessful in love: Jocas, Pia, Vibart, Hippolyta, and Graphos. These characters fail in love for many of the same reasons that the characters in the Quartet fail: incest, adultery, prostitution, and unrequited love. But the emphasis in Tunc and Nunquam is on the destruction caused by lack of freedom.

The control wielded by Julian and the firm is heightened with the departure from narrative realism. With these two novels, Durrell ventures into the realm of science fiction, which Kingsley Amis defines as

> that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesized on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-science or pseudo-technology, whether human or extra-terrestrial in origin. (18)

In The Revolt of Aphrodite science and technology make possible the control of individuals and the creation of a replica of a human being. Thus, although these paired novels contain little of the narrative experimentation of the Quartet regarding time and place, they are an experiment in another genre for Durrell.

Following in the tradition of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, The Revolt of Aphrodite is concerned with the production of a life and the question of what it means to be human. Therefore, the genre of science fiction allows Durrell to explore in yet another way the process of creation and the theme of love. Previous to these novels, Durrell has examined two fundamental creative endeavours: the production of works of art (including music, painting, and literature) and the production of children. In The Revolt of Aphrodite, through the genre of science fiction, Durrell combines these two creative products. The novels are concerned with the development of a human being through technology and the manipulation of memory. Thus Durrell is not far from the themes of his previous works; in fact he is simply exploring the ability of a new genre to present his ideas about creativity and love. Like Darley, Felix Charlock, the narrator of The Revolt of Aphrodite, must come to terms with his experience so that he can become a person capable of beneficial love. The mode has not even shifted very much: both Darley and Charlock learn by writing down their experiences although Charlock's main creative output is in scientific inventions not literature. Another similarity between the Quartet and The Revolt of Aphrodite is Durrell's attempt to engage the reader in active participation. Durrell has indicated that he was striving to show that readers cannot be detached: "I was determined to involve the reader in the circuit, to get him out of his passive role as onlooker by making him the subject of the novel in the second volume, one of the characters" (Alyn 135). But Durrell's attempt to force the reader to participate actively is less successful in The Revolt of Aphrodite than in the Quartet because of the decreased complexity in the narrative of the paired novels.

In order to understand and evaluate The Revolt of Aphrodite, it is necessary first to scrutinize the presentation of the theme of love and see how it compares to previous presentations. Both failure and success in love require examination to determine emerging patterns in Durrell's view of love. It is also important to examine its formal narrative structure, with an emphasis on the handling of time, and the use Durrell makes of the genre of science fiction.

Part One: Love and Freedom

In The Revolt of Aphrodite Durrell further develops his concept of beneficial love by concentrating on the importance of freedom in a love relationship. Without freedom, beneficial love is impossible. This theme is developed in the same manner that it is in the Quartet: Durrell offers several examples of unsuccessful love relationships. The only beneficial love in *The Revolt of Aphrodite* is that of Charlock and Benedicta in *Nunquam*, who, like Darley and Clea, undergo a great deal of suffering before they are capable of sharing a positive love. An examination of the main couples in these novels demonstrates that Durrell is continuing the perspective on love that he develops in his earlier works.

Using the character of Julian, Durrell shows the destructive side of love that is developed when power and control are the motivations. Julian fails at love with Benedicta, Iolanthe, and the replica of Iolanthe, and the failure in each case results from Julian's inability to relinquish control. He is unable to see a woman as an individual with a separate will. Therefore he is driven to recreate Iolanthe, to mold a creature that is the exact replica of the woman he loved, and once that is accomplished, he tries to establish a relationship with the replica. Although Charlock and Benedicta in *Tunc* and Julian and his three relationships are the main illustrations of incorrect love, other couples are also used as examples of faulty love: Charlock and Iolanthe, and the two love triangles of Jocas, Pia, and Vibart plus Hippolyta, Graphos, and Iolanthe.

Durrell said that *The Revolt of Aphrodite* is about the "confrontation between inner riches and worldly riches. It's the struggle for happiness" (Alyn 137). Only Charlock and Benedicta are able to free themselves from the firm and truly love. Only they have the possibility of happiness, but first they experience much unhappiness, including the trauma of losing their son. Joan Goulianos commented in an interview with Durrell: "In 'Nunquam,' you present the couple as the basic unit of a culture, in other words, sexuality, love relationships. And yet, many of the relationships in your work seem to be distorted. The characters are maimed, wounded" (161). Durrell's response was to say, "Those are the great psychic wounds that come from living the wrong way. The wrong principles" (161). The wounds that characters in Durrell's novels sustain are clear indications of their lack of knowledge of how to live correctly, in particular how to love correctly. The list of the psychologically and physically damaged characters in Durrell's works is lengthy because it includes almost every character. Only a few learn from their suffering, modify their ideas and behaviour, and transcend their former lives. At the end of The Revolt of Aphrodite Charlock and Benedicta are on the threshold of a new life. They are rehabilitated through pain, in much the same way as Darley and Clea are in the Quartet.

The courtship and marriage of Charlock and Benedicta is grounded in ignorance and manipulation, and the novel makes it evident that until these aspects are eradicated, the marriage is doomed. Benedicta is used as bait by Julian to entice Charlock into the firm, and Charlock, being naive, falls for the ruse. There is some suggestion of strong feelings between the two, but unfortunately Benedicta's feelings are based precisely on what Charlock gives up by joining the firm: his freedom. At one point in their marriage she tells him, "'I only really loved you when I thought you were determined to be free from the firm. It seemed to promise me my own freedom. But afterwards I saw that you were just like everyone else'" (Tunc 147). Beneficial love enters the lives of Charlock and Benedicta once they both recognize the importance of freedom and the necessity of fighting for it.

Charlock's battle for freedom is waged on two fronts: the personal and the public, but in these novels, the personal level of social discourse is subsumed by the public. The firm controls everyone's lives in all aspects, not only work. Charlock finally learns that he must escape from the firm or lose his individuality and capacity for goodness. There are two main reasons why Charlock tries to break away from the security of the firm. First, he has no control over his professional life; he does not have any power over what is done with his inventions. For example, the filament he invents, which he thinks will provide light, is adapted to weaponry against his desire and without his permission. His essentially good nature is shown when he says, "'How disappointing. I was hoping my toys would help the human race, not . . . well, contribute to its quarrels'" (201). The second reason for his attempted defection is that he has no control over his private life. His marriage to Benedicta is governed by outside powers, namely Julian and Nash, Benedicta's doctor, and decisions about his son, including his name, are made without any consultation with Charlock.

The relationship that Benedicta and Charlock have in _Tunc_ appears based on physical attraction and lack of communication. In fact one of the first things Benedicta says to Charlock at the beginning of their intimacy is "Never ask me anything about myself, will you? You must ask Jocas, if you want to know anything. There's a great deal I do not know. I mustn't be frightened, you see" (141). Charlock's response is acceptance: "It seemed to me perfectly logical and I accepted the proposition, sealing the pact there and then with kisses that grew ever more breathless" (141-2). Charlock has no idea that he is being manipulated, and his ready acceptance of his ignorance is a major factor in the failure of his relationship with Benedicta in _Tunc_. Love, in Durrell's world, must be knowledgeable love; any other manifestation produces pain. Charlock's willingness not to ask Benedicta about herself is a grave error, one for which he suffers enormously.

From the beginning, Charlock and Benedicta's relationship is presented in negative terms. Even the feelings Charlock has regarding sex with Benedicta show the unwholesomeness of their encounters: "Anyway, making love with a sort of breathless resignation--or else desperately, like someone trying to pull an arrow from the flesh before the poison has time to spread" (154). But the poison has time to spread, and Charlock finds himself preparing for matrimony. He is left out of all decisions, including the date of the wedding, as he is later left out of decisions regarding his son. Julian takes charge of all plans, and although Charlock finds this arrangement peculiar, he does nothing to take responsibility himself. He is content to let other people arrange his life without questioning their motivation. Benedicta even says to him regarding the marriage settlement, "We must have perfect equality in love" (164), pointing out the obvious lack of equality in their lives, which only grows worse after their marriage. The emptiness of their married life is symbolized by the false books in the massive library of their country house. Charlock says, "[T]o browse among the titles one would have imagined the room to contain virtually the sum total of European culture. But the books were all playful make-believe, empty buckram and gilt" (189). The facade of knowledge is present but not the substance, just as only the facade of love and unity is present in the marriage.

Even the facade finally crumbles. The crisis is precipitated by Benedicta's pregnancy, which brings on a bout of her recurrent madness. When she finally returns to

England with their son, she tells Charlock, "He has come between us now, don't you see?" (237). When she decides they should separate, she says, "Nothing can happen to me any more, now that I have told you the truth, how we must separate. You see, it has freed me to love you again" (240). The importance of the conjunction of love, freedom, and truth-telling is suggested in Tunc, but the conjunction is not fully realized until later in Nunquam. Because neither Charlock nor Benedicta is free and because they are incapable of expressing themselves, their marriage is doomed to failure in Tunc.

Two events push Charlock to the edge and cause him to retire to the country before he attempts a breakaway. The first is in his public life: he wants to give away one of his inventions, a new kind of cleaner, one that "will completely transform washing-up" (283). Julian is appalled at this notion of giving something away and tries to convince Charlock that the firm already makes many charitable donations. As Charlock points out, the firm gains tax benefits from these donations. He says, "I have simply come to a point where I must make a gesture, even the feeblest of free gestures, to continue breathing" (285). But this desire to act freely is blocked by Julian.

The second event that pushes Charlock to the edge also involves Julian. Charlock believes he has finally grasped the problem with Benedicta and thinks he has the key to her madness. He accuses Julian of having Benedicta as his mistress, and develops sympathy for his wife's apparently untenable position. He sees that he "never really talked to her" (289) and rushes to her to explain. But the recognition of the lack of communication in their marriage comes too late, for Benedicta has already slipped into madness again, thereby preventing any exchange of information and any possible reconciliation.

Believing that Julian is the source of all his problems, both private and public, Charlock devises a trap for him in the memory machine, Abel, and then plans his escape from the firm. But, as we learn at the beginning of _Nunquam_, the plan backfires, and the victim is Charlock's son, Mark, instead of Julian. Ironically, the first time Charlock knowingly creates an instrument of destruction what is destroyed is his most precious creation: his son. Like his biblical namesake, Mark is a martyr, killed by Abel, a name that also alludes to the Bible, but in this case, the Old Testament. However, instead of Mark's destroying Abel as Cain kills Abel, the machine named Abel kills his metaphorical brother. In effect, one of Charlock's treasured creations slaughters the other. The loss of both his vocation as an inventor and the loss of his son can be seen as the result of Charlock's lack of freedom, which in turn comes from his infatuation with and hasty marriage to Benedicta. The message is clear: a loveless life leads to destruction. Both Benedicta and Charlock lose their sanity, and like many other children in Durrell's novels, Mark does not survive because of the lack of beneficial love between his parents.

Other characters in The Revolt of Aphrodite experience pain because of faulty love. The most obvious example is Julian, who is castrated by his father for engaging in incest with Benedicta. Like Pursewarden and Liza's incest, Julian and Benedicta's is punished by grievous harm to the male. Both women suffer, but they also go on to experience beneficial love. It is noteworthy that before Liza and Benedicta get to the stage of being capable of beneficial love, they both lose a child. The innocent child cannot survive in an adult world lacking beneficial love. Vibart's wife, Pia, also loses a child, perhaps as punishment for her affair with Jocas. And when she is in an apparently loveless marriage, Iolanthe has a child who suffocates to death in a bank vault. The fate of children in Durrell's works is generally depressing and is directly related to the actions of their parents.

After his castration, Julian does not become involved with any woman until he falls in love with Iolanthe. The curious thing about his love for her is that it is typically adolescent: he is in love with the screen image of a movie star. He does not love a real woman; he idolizes a famous actress, a celluloid creation. His love for Iolanthe takes the same form as his love for Benedicta; it is a matter of possession. Once when Benedicta said that she loved him, he struck her: "He was trying to say that it was not love, it was possession, and that her use of the word diminished the truth of the sentiment" (Nunquam 43). His feelings for Iolanthe are similar. Iolanthe tells Charlock:

> "[M]y company is hovering on the brink of bankruptcy all the time--thanks to Julian of course. He could not bear to see me free. . . . I saw him once--just a single look we exchanged, a look to last a lifetime. I knew then that he loved me--indeed in a perverse way all the more for crossing him, for breaking free. With my first money I set up my own firm , chose my own parts. Julian has tried to break us because--again perversely--his only way of getting me would be by owning me, having shares in me." (Tunc 268)

Julian's attempt to have Iolanthe by creating an object in her image is as unsuccessful as his attempt to have the real Iolanthe. He can never be successful at love because he is completely negative about what love entails. He understands it as possession and as one of the ways in which man tries to impose order "'from fear of the fathomless darkness which lies beyond every idea'" (Nunquam 88). He tells Charlock, "'Look at our little love-asylum--everyone seeking for somebody with whom they can be thoroughly weak'" (88). Instead of being weak, Julian adopts a position of strength and control in all his relationships, and because of the lack of equality inherent in such a situation, he fails to experience a healthy, life-enhancing kind of love.

Julian's view of love is connected to his view of freedom, and his essential negativity about life stems from his idea that people are not free. He lectures Charlock on how the freedom of the individual is indistinguishable from that of the group:

> "And then all this whine about personal freedom--everyone feels it is his right to worry himself about the matter. They don't see, you don't see, that nothing can be done in this field unless the firm itself becomes free; then and only then could the notion of a personal freedom be assured. And even while the poor fool is waving his arms and talking about freewill he is being subtly grooved by his culture, formed by it--money, fashions, architecture, laws, machines, foods. At what point can he really say that he stands free and clear away from the pattern in which he was cradled and by which he was formed? God! will we never see more than one profile of reality at a time?" (Nunquam 89)

If the firm is a metaphor for culture, it may be inescapable. The culture must change in order for people to be able to change and be free. But then they would be trapped in a new culture. In a broader sense, if the firm is a metaphor for life, the only way it can be escaped is through death. Julian's inability to see "more than one profile of reality at a time" culminates in his death, while Charlock's dawning realization of this importance of seeing the various sides--life and death, for example--contributes to his attempt to destroy the firm.

At the end of Tunc Koepgen tells Charlock about meeting an old man who claims to be Merlin, the founder of the firm. The old man tells Koepgen, "'The firm only exists to be escaped from. Tell Charlock'" (310).

Durrell's emphasis on the importance of death and its relationship to how life is approached make it likely that the firm can represent culture and life. One of Charlock's lessons is to learn the importance of death to life. As he tells Nash at the beginning of Tunc, "'As for me, scientifically speaking the full terror of death has not informed my loving'" (13). Charlock's choice of the word "scientifically" indicates his approach to life. He needs to be shown results because he is poor at intuiting them. He also must come to appreciate the limits of science, and this lesson is gained through the destruction caused by Abel and the questions about humanity and reality that are raised by the creation of the replica of Iolanthe. Charlock learns about life through his experiences with death. The loss of his child helps to bring him and Benedicta together, and the deaths of Jocas, Julian, and the fake Iolanthe help him to see the role he can play in producing freedom for himself and others. Charlock's experiences with death also help him to see "more than one profile of reality at a time." He learns that life and death are connected, as are life and freedom, and that he must try to see the various profiles of reality.

Julian is unable to see different realities. He is trapped by the reality of his impotence. The most significant factor in his psychological makeup is his castration, and the most important aspect of it is not that he is deprived of sexual activity but that he cannot have children. *The Revolt of Aphrodite* continues to develop Durrell's idea that beneficial love is adult, heterosexual, and procreative. Apart from one's own death in this work, the worst thing that can happen is the death of a child. In *Nunquam* Julian tells Charlock that they are equal: "I tried to kill you, Felix, and you tried to kill me--in both cases it was a near thing. But you lost a child, and I have been rendered incapable of making one. In a way this makes us quits" (94). The loss of a child or the inability to create one is the greatest example of hopelessness. It is the worst kind of imaginative failure because no new imagination is produced.

In a completely perverse way, it is apt that the replica of Iolanthe falls in love with Julian. Both are sterile, and both lack essential humanity, although the dummy can quite rightly be seen as being more human than Julian. In some ways the replica is the most compelling character in the novel because it questions its humanity and freedom. Reed Way Dasenbrock says that the replica "is more truly human, more uncontrollable and spontaneous, than the humans" ("Death and the Counterlife . . . " 318), and he points out that Charlock's reservations about the whole project of creating the replica indicate his concern with what constitutes culture. This concern is finally shifted to the reader, who is thus forced to ponder what it means to be human when there is no apparent difference between the real and the fake Iolanthe and a great deal of difference between the fake Iolanthe and the human beings.

What constitutes humanity is a question that is addressed not only by the characters but also by the presentation of them. There is a reduction in the level of complexity of the characters in The Revolt of Aphrodite from the level in the Quartet. The impersonality of the conflict in The Revolt of Aphrodite is a major factor in this change in characterization. G.S. Fraser comments:

> [The Revolt of Aphrodite] quite frankly lacks, for instance, the psychological interest of The Alexandria Quartet: one point of the quartet, of course, was to underline the peculiar inconsistency and complexity of human character, the incompleteness of the individual in and to himself, his discovering of new, or hidden, aspects of himself in new relationships. But the people are to be taken "for real" and are explored, one might say, in depth.
>
> In Tunc-Nunquam all the characters (I would except Charlock, but not all critics would) are two-dimensional. A very skillfully constructed plot, full of suspense, and an abundance of bawdy humour supply, for the reader, the lack of real psychological interest. The fact that the characters in Tunc-Nunquam do seem (the "bad" Benedicta in Tunc, the "good" Benedicta in Nunquam, Julian relentless or Julian relenting) to behave inconsistently does not mean that they have depth. (156-7)

Fraser's point that the characters in The Revolt of Aphrodite are less psychologically intricate and interesting than those in the Quartet is well taken. However, the impersonality of the characters can be seen, like the lack of experimentation in the narrative, as part of the theme. The firm is a metaphor for life and as such shows the difficulty of maintaining personal integrity and freedom in a world based on the motives of profit and control.

The firm, like the modern technological world, has a dehumanizing effect on its members. It also has an inhibiting effect on the creative act: Charlock cannot possibly be a truly inventive writer because to achieve such a level of artistry would violate the formulaic generic format of the novel. One experiment appears to be enough for Durrell in this novel, and thus it is appropriate that the narrator is not pursuing or developing a particular aesthetic view. As an inventor, a scientist of sorts, Charlock is presenting the reader with empirical evidence and a specific solution to a specific problem.

The lack of psychological depth that Fraser sees is the result of a combination of the genre and the narrative form, but more importantly, it is a result of the theme that love requires freedom and individuality in order to exist. As Carole Mablekos says, _Tunc_ and _Nunquam_ "are dominated by thematic concerns rather than psychological insights" (48). I agree with Mablekos, and unlike Fraser, I think Charlock is as two-dimensional as all the other characters. It is likely that we are more sympathetic to him because he is the narrator and the one whom we know most about. He is also taken advantage of by other characters, and so the reader's sympathy is heightened.

Charlock is a decent, naive man who gets deceived by very powerful and manipulative people, in particular Julian.

The dehumanizing effect of power and loss of freedom is seen most clearly in Julian, who produces the replica, a beautiful love machine. But Julian cannot experience love: in fact he is consistently referred to in terms that cast him as the personification of evil. For example, he is compared to Simon Magus, "one of the patriarchs of the gnostic heresy" (Walker 136). Simon Magus travelled with a woman named Helena who he believed was Helen of Troy, and he thought that the real Helen of Troy was a doll. Charlock says of Julian, "[W]hy should he not aspire to the mastery over age and time that Simon Magus first achieved?" (Nunquam 42-3). The reason is clear: the aspirations are wrong. Both Simon Magus and Julian attempt to play god, and both die for it. Charlock's comparison of Julian to a Black Prince and Hitler reinforces the view of him as an evil being. Charlock says, "But you'd have thought that Hitler himself had sent for me if you'd seen the four huge black limousines coming to a halt in the drive of the Paulhaus; Julian travelled like a Black Prince with numerous secretaries, perhaps even gunmen for all I know" (Nunquam 111). Durrell says that "the destruction of Julian is, very roughly speaking, the fall of Lucifer" (Lyons 48). Julian is finally punished for his perversion of love into possession. The relationship of the replica and Julian comes to a logical close.

Appropriately, they come across each other in St. Paul's on the occasion of Jocas' funeral. Julian attempts to make contact with the fake Iolanthe, "as cautiously as a child trying to catch a rare butterfly" (Nunquam 279). When he gets close to the replica, it jumps over the balustrade to its destruction, and in an attempt to stop the fall, Julian also crashes to the floor below and dies. The desire to control others is clearly demonstrated to be wrong. So it is also perfectly fitting that their lives come to an end at the same time on the floor of St. Paul's.

Frank Kersnowski has examined these novels in terms of Jungian psychology, and his comments are helpful. He writes:

> For Durrell, a now or never crisis exists. Either man will continue to exist in a monolithic state that destroys his individuality by reducing his complexity, or he will commit himself to a life in which a more complete human potential is sought. The latter may cause chaos; but the former, as Jung said, will certainly necessitate societies that exist as "lunatic asylums." Freed from the terrifying projections of the unconscious, Felix and Benedicta follow the "law" as Jung stated it and make the experience of love a union of body, individual soul, and archetype. On a quite symbolical Christmas Eve, Felix goes to destroy the records. As he travels there, the novel ends, leaving the reader to read himself. (8-9)

Freedom may well cause chaos, as Kersnowski points out, but without it man has lost his humanity. The lack of humanity and psychological depth in the characters in The Revolt Aphrodite is thus appropriate because they are being dehumanized by their culture. And because the main purpose of the characters is to exemplify Durrell's themes, it is appropriate to consider them, as Kersnowski does, in the light of a psychological system rather than as unique and organically changeable entities.

Tone Rugset has also examined Tunc and Nunquam using Jungian psychology. He says, "In Jungian terms Tunc-Nunquam represents a quest for wholeness, a struggle to integrate contradictory elements, both on the personal and cultural level" (161). According to Rugset, two of these contradictory elements are western intellectualism and oriental mysticism. The reconciliation of these elements, which is hinted at in The Revolt of Aphrodite, is dealt with more fully, I think, in Durrell's subsequent novels, the Quintet.

In Tunc and Nunquam, the lack of psychological interest or depth that the characters exhibit is a direct result of their lack of wholeness. Because the characters are not free but are bound by their culture, their imagination and individuality suffer. Thus it is ironic that the one character who is willing to die for freedom is the non-human Iolanthe. And it is this willingness to die that encourages Charlock to burn the archives. Before the replica is fully functional, Charlock remarks: "The idea of destroying the firm's entire contract system had begun to tease the edges of my mind; of course it was preposterous, but then everything was. What was more preposterous than returning to England to set Pygmalion's image walking?" (Nunquam 241). The replica is set walking, but no one knows what its reactions will be. It becomes immediately clear, though, that the fake Iolanthe believes it is real and has the problems of the person on which it is modelled. Significantly, it has the imaginative scope of the real woman.

It is impossible to tell the difference between the fake and real Iolanthe. Through the technology of Charlock's memory machine, the replica has the memory of the real woman--her record of time--and for all intents and purposes is the real woman. The crisis in Nunquam is precipitated when the replica decides to escape its creators to live as an independent human being, which it believes it is. The replica, like human beings, has been given a corporeal framework, but that is insufficient to constitute the self. To be truly human means to have some kind of control over time, in effect to control narrative.

The main concern of the replica mirrors that of the real person: freedom or control of its time. The fake Iolanthe tells Charlock:

> "I've had a strange feeling growing up inside me that I must change everything--make a break for liberty. . . . My dear friend, the worst that could happen--I have fallen in love with Julian. That is what frightens me so much. I was always ferociously independent, as you know. I feel now

> that I mustn't sink any lower into this adoration. I must, so to speak, negotiate from a position of strength. But he won't help to set me free; he wants me bound and gagged, and at his mercy." (Nunquam 264)

Initially Julian thinks that his plan to create "a marvellous consort" (Nunquam 181) is successful because he believes that the fake Iolanthe is incapable of love. But the real Iolanthe was familiar with love, and so when her memory is incorporated into the mechanical replica, the replica is cognizant of the feeling. It also remembers its desire for freedom from Julian, and this desire leads it to prefer being destroyed to being a possession.

The main examples of incorrect love--the relationship of Charlock and Benedicta in Tunc and the three relationships of Julian--point out clearly the folly of lack of communication and the danger in viewing love as possession rather than as a gift between equals. Other examples show additional problems that are created by loving incorrectly. For example, homosexuality is touched on briefly in the relationship of Sipple and Iolanthe's brother. Iolanthe kills her brother to preserve the family's honour, and Sipple, who is suspected of the murder, must flee the country. In the case of Vibart and Pia, adultery and homosexuality combine to thwart the happiness of the couple. Pia's affair with Jocas hurts Vibart, but his view of their relationship is that it is already in trouble. He tells Charlock that the affair was partially his fault:

> "It has to do with the quality of my loving, the subtle thing that didn't click between Pia and me. It came from the fact that I loved her not as a man loves a woman, but as a woman loves a man. In a subtle sort of way my attitude qualified my masculinity in the exchange. . . . I'd returned the flow of affect or whatever upside down; and she was too much of a woman to love except as a woman." (Nunquam 237)

These two examples show the negative view of homosexuality being developed in Durrell's works. And homosexuality is only one of the many incorrect ways to love that are presented in Durrell's works. One of the few examples of loving correctly is offered in the rehabilitated versions of Charlock and Benedicta in Nunquam. It is important to note that their chance for happiness is expressed in sexual terms. Charlock says, "The pretty seizures of the love act brought us once more to comfort, to wholeness and at last to sleep--a sleep so innocent that it seemed we had invented it for ourselves, as the only fitting form of self-expression" (217). In Tunc the sexual encounters of Charlock and Benedicta are described in terms of spreading poison, but in Nunquam the renewed couple's sexual activity is described in terms of wholeness and innocence, thereby signifying that their love is positive and beneficial.

In the second novel, Charlock and Benedicta are redeemed through the suffering incurred by the loss of their son. Their marriage is salvaged as they attempt to free themselves from the firm and from Julian. After

Mark's death Charlock is in the Paulhaus and slowly begins the process of regeneration and reunification. Charlock realizes while in the Paulhaus that knowledge is gained through another person:

> The final problem of intellection is this: you cannot rape yourself mentally for thought creates its own shadow, blocks its own light, inhibits direct vision. The act of intuition or self-illumination can come only through a partner-object--like a host in parasitology. (Nunquam 26)

Science and technology are not the key to knowledge; only a human partner can offer illumination.

In addition to this realization, Charlock also learns that Benedicta and Julian are siblings. Benedicta's confession of this information shows the shift in her loyalty from her brother to her husband. She explains to Charlock that the death of Mark freed her from Julian's influence:

> "There is so much that I must face, must tell you; now that I'm free from Julian I can. . . . There was a precise moment [of freedom] for me, as well as one for him. Mine came when the child was shot--like waking from a long nightmare. . . . The image of Julian flew into a hundred pieces never to be reassembled again; he had no further power over me." (Nunquam 30-31)

Mark's death frees Charlock and Benedicta, releasing Benedicta from the grip of her brother. To fill the void formed by Mark's death, Charlock and Benedicta repair their marriage, beginning with an explanation of the past relationship between Benedicta and Julian. The process of unification depends on truth: thus Benedicta reveals the incest and Julian's subsequent castration at the hands of their father. She also discloses how she murdered her first husband, a man she had married at Julian's insistence so that he would enter the firm. The relationship between death and love is emphasised by the fact that while Benedicta recounts her grisly tales, she and Charlock are making love. He says, "While she spoke, I was making love to her, I was happy" (Nunquam 39).

The healing of Benedicta is exhibited in ways other than her confession. For example, she stops sleepwalking. She also burns all her wigs, saying to Charlock, "From now on nothing that isn't my own" (Nunquam 63). She gains insight to the actions of other people. For example, she realizes that Caradoc wants to be reinstated in the firm and that Julian does not give his permission. Charlock's inability to understand Caradoc's and Julian's actions indicates that he is still in the process of determining what freedom is. With Benedicta, though, he can make the appropriate advances in his understanding.

What happens after Charlock burns the firm's records is unknown, but the implication is that success in dismantling the firm is not assured. The message is simply that an attempt must be made. Like Darley and Clea at the end of the Quartet, Charlock and Benedicta have only the possibility of happiness, not the surety. But that is more than they had before, and it is much more than any other character in the novel has.

The theme of The Revolt of Aphrodite is similar to that of the Quartet: creativity and love make life a positive experience. Once again creativity is approached in two ways. One can create objects such as books or inventions, or one can procreate and bring new life into the world. In the science fiction slant of the novels, especially Nunquam, Julian attempts to thwart his impotence and his desire for control by creating a consort. His fate shows that this approach is wrong: one cannot create a human being, nor can one experience love in the guise of possession. Happiness is possible only through love and only when the love is between equal and free individuals.

Part Two: Narrative Form and Genre

When Tunc and Nunquam were published, Durrell refrained from making any claims of newness regarding the method of narration and thus did not generate the same level of interest in these novels as he did with the Quartet. Reviews of Tunc and Nunquam were generally negative,[20] and critical attention to them has been scant compared to that on the Quartet. Instead of talking about relativity and its effect on form and content, Durrell has indicated that The Revolt of Aphrodite had a different stimulus:

> I got the inspiration for it from Spengler's famous book The Decline of

> the West, which contained some astonishing foresights, including Caesarism (which culminated in nazism) and gold, a notion which heralded Freud's theories. It is the story of a young inventor who needs society in order to implement his discoveries. Every invention has a universal significance. (Alyn 136)

Unlike the Quartet the emphasis in The Revolt of Aphrodite is thematic; narrative experimentation has been laid aside. Yet The Revolt of Aphrodite is not a straightforward narrative in the manner of many nineteenth century novels despite Durrell's claim that it is "oldfashioned." The time sequence is occasionally fragmented and disrupted. For example, in Chapter One of Tunc Charlock is in Athens, planning his escape from the firm and waiting for Koepgen. In flashbacks he remembers discussions in London with Nash and Vibart. Charlock has already married Benedicta and created his memory machine, Abel, his two most important actions. Before escaping from the firm, he wants to see Athens one more time, in particular the hotel room he once shared with Iolanthe. Chapter Two moves into the past to detail Charlock's meeting with Iolanthe and his early experiments with his recording devices. In Chapter Three Charlock meets Benedicta, plans to marry her, and joins the firm. The narrative continues in chronological fashion until the seventh and final chapter when the story is brought up to the present, the same moment of the beginning. As Charlock sits and waits in Athens, his son, Mark, commits suicide using the boobytrapped machine called Abel although this action is not made clear until the second volume.

Nunquam opens with Charlock in the Paulhaus, the firm's private psychiatric hospital. The first chapter is stylistically similar to Justine: Charlock presents his thoughts in a confused manner, as does Darley in the earlier novel. In both cases the narrator is a character who is trying to make sense of his life. The difficulty of the task is reflected in the disjointed narrative, a technique that is used more frequently and with greater effect in the Quartet. The narrative experimentation of the Quartet is also more appropriate because its narrator is a writer who is concerned with narrative form. The narrator of Tunc and Nunquam is an inventor who wants to record his experiences. Eugene Lyons and Harry T. Antrim point out: "Felix Charlock, Durrell's narrator and electronic Frankenstein, has little in common with the Quartet's Darley, if an occasional tendency toward lush verbal description be excepted" (Lyons 42). Or as Durrell says:

> [Felix Charlock] isn't another image of Darley. Darley is looking for himself as an artist, and for him the discovery of himself as an artist is the most important thing. Felix is already an artist with a whole paralyzed affective side of his nature, which he ascribes to being a member of the firm. His control over his freedom and his free will is what possesses him, and it's there that [Nunquam] starts. (Lyons 47)

The motivations for the two narrators are different although to some extent each narrator is recording his experience in order to understand it. Charlock, however, does not have Darley's desire to experiment with the narrative form of the novel. Consequently, after the first chapter of _Nunquam_ the narrative is chronological and straightforward.

Thus _The Revolt of Aphrodite_ has little of the time disruption of the Quartet and none of the relative truth of events. It does not have the various perspectives of time and place that the Quartet is committed to although there is one example of a disruption in the narrative point of view. Charlock is the narrator of most of both volumes, except for the last chapter of _Tunc_. It is not clear who the narrator of this part is, but it cannot be Charlock because he is not present at the events being described. Unless he is reconstructing the events that lead up to his son's death, the point of view of this chapter is inconsistent with the rest of the novel. This shift in point of view is also qualitatively different from those in the Quartet. First of all, it seems like a mistake, and secondly, it is not used to develop the idea that the nature of reality is relative. In _The Revolt of Aphrodite_ there is a sense that reality is discernible whether or not Charlock understands what is happening. This sense contrasts what Durrell has done in the Quartet, and it contrasts what two of the characters in _Tunc_ say. Caradoc says:

> "Haven't you noticed Charlock that most things in life happen just outside one's range of vision? One has to see them out of the corner of one's eye. And any one thing could be the effect of any number of others? I mean there seem to be always a dozen perfectly appropriate explanations to every phenomenon. That is what makes our reasoning minds so unsatisfactory; and yet, they are all we've got, this shabby piece of equipment." (Tunc 100)

Hippolyta says, "There seems to be a hundred reasons to account for every act. Finally one hesitates to ascribe any of them to the act. Life gets more and more mysterious, not less" (Tunc 231). Lee Lemon says in regard to Hippolyta's statement that

> unlike most of his contemporaries, Durrell finds this mystery, this flexibility of reality, exhilarating. . . . It is exhilarating not only because it is intellectually challenging (and, Durrell would say, reflects the way the world is), but also because it liberates the imagination; to an extent, it permits us to remake our reality. (5)

Durrell has remade reality in this work through the conventions of science fiction, but he has not developed the mystery of reality in the same way as he did in the Quartet. Both Darley and Charlock are trying to get to the heart of their experience, but their understanding of what experience is differs radically. The nature of the mystery is different.

Hippolyta's and Caradoc's statements sound very much like those in the Quartet regarding the relative nature of reality. But The Revolt of Aphrodite has none of the relativity of the Quartet. Charlock does not have to relearn his past the way Darley does. Charlock is given so little information about the firm and his wife that he has no basis to deal with or to rearrange. Nor does The Revolt of Aphrodite present an exercise in organizing conflicting points of view the way the Quartet does. The shift in point of view in the last chapter of Tunc does not present the reader with a new reality; it simply lets the reader see the plot unfold. Thus even though Caradoc and Hippolyta comment on relativity, there is little of it in this work. Charlock's task is to fill in the missing bits of information: Darley has this task, but in addition he has to make the pieces fit his existing perceptions of reality.

What is evident about reality in The Revolt of Aphrodite is that it is much more malevolent than the realities presented in the Quartet. There, although the scope of the novel includes historical events such as the second world war and in a sense the events are more real than those in Tunc and especially in Nunquam, the focus is personal. In The Revolt of Aphrodite the focus is impersonal. Charlock's problems are different from Darley's in that Charlock must contend with the powerful forces of the firm, an entity whose control is widespread. Darley does not have a similar antagonist. Durrell has shifted his focus in The Revolt of Aphrodite from the development of the individual, which he presented in the

Quartet and his previous works, to the development of the individual in society. In one way The Revolt of Aphrodite is similar to The Black Book: both narrators are grappling with the pressure of a difficult society that stifles the individual. Even the problems faced by Christian Marlowe, Reuben, and Frances in Panic Spring fall into this category. But the problems for the characters in The Revolt of Aphrodite are more radical in terms of their freedom: it is the entire civilization that enslaves, not one class or segment of it.

Although these paired novels do not represent an experiment in narrative for Durrell, they do offer a new genre, that of science fiction. When asked if he had "simply taken hold of a science fiction gimmick?" (Lyons 52), Durrell replied, "Oh, deliberately. But just as in the Quartet I was trying to beat Simenon up, so I'm beating the SF boys up" (Lyons 52).

The main technique of science fiction in The Revolt of Aphrodite is the advanced technology that makes the creation of the replica of Iolanthe possible. Willis E. McNelly says, ". . . sf writers deliberately alter our world so that we may look upon it more clearly" (63). Durrell certainly alters reality in this work by presenting the creation of what appears to be a human being. Such a creature does not exist; Durrell uses the alteration of reality to force questions about the nature of humanity and the importance of freedom. There is a problem with the replica, though: its technology is not consistently powerful. For example, if the replica has the physical and emotional attributes of a human being including the ability to have sex, its inability to eat or expell waste appears as an anomaly. The technology is at the service of the ideas Durrell is promoting, and this relationship results in a deficiency in the imaginative world.

Comparing The Revolt of Aphrodite to Nineteen Eighty-Four, a novel to which it is similar in terms of plot, shows the problems with the former. Big Brother in Orwell's novel is the same as the firm in Durrell's, and Winston Smith's quest for freedom is the same as Charlock's. But Nineteen Eighty-Four is a dystopia: the technology serves the totalitarianism, and Winston Smith's struggle is ultimately hopeless. Charlock's struggle has the possibility of success; therefore, one of the tenets of the novels--that man has no freedom--is being challenged and violated. Even Durrell says that the meaning of the novel "is that it's impossible to escape from civilization" (Alyn 136). Durrell sets up the world in The Revolt of Aphrodite much as Orwell does in Nineteen Eighty-Four. Both start off as dystopias, but only Orwell's ends that way. Thus The Revolt of Aphrodite is weakened because of the inconsistent power of the technology. As science fiction it is unsatisfying because the technology is manipulated to match Durrell's themes.

Thus *Tunc* and *Nunquam* may be considered in some ways as science fiction, but the generic strictures are dropped when the theme necessitates it. *The Revolt of Aphrodite* is more concerned with basic philosophical questions of metaphysics and ontology than with meeting the conditions for science fiction.

Thus with *The Revolt of Aphrodite* Durrell ventures into new territory in terms of genre while diminishing the amount and intensity of narrative experimentation. However, his theme of love remains consistent: a loveless life is an unhappy empty life. Love leads to happiness because it aids the individual in the process of self-discovery and self-knowledge. Not only is love important, but it also must be of a certain kind: adult, heterosexual, and regenerative. Beneficial love cannot be separated from sex. In Durrell's works sexual intercourse is the strongest manifestation of human unity. As James R. Nichols says, "Ironically, it is sex--human fecundity and possibility--that will save western man from his own greed and materialism" (133). This theme is explored in *The Revolt of Aphrodite* through the use of the twists and disruptions in reality introduced by the use of elements of science fiction.

Chapter Five

Love in the Quintet

The conservative and traditional views of love that Durrell has developed in his previous fiction are reiterated and expanded in the Quintet. The basic view of love remains the same: love helps individuals to gain self-knowledge through unification with another person, but beneficial love is restricted to that which is adult, heterosexual, and procreative. Beneficial love can exist only between free and equal partners, and as we have seen in the previous novels, it is enormously difficult to establish and maintain.

These fundamental tenets remain unchanged in the Quintet, but a new dimension is added. The importance of sex in love is greatly expanded, and the influence of Eastern philosophy can be seen. The key couple that exemplifies this development is Constance and Affad. Constance, the European psychoanalyst, and Affad, the Egyptian gnostic, provide a meeting ground for Western views of personality as developed by Freud, and Eastern views of it as developed in Taoism. Both Freudian and Taoist views have been a part of Durrell's writings from their inception, but the Quintet offers the clearest articulation of the fusion of the two. In addition to Affad's Eastern philosophical outlook regarding sex is his gnostic view of the world, a view that has a great deal to say about creativity and purpose. Again, gnosticism is not new to Durrell's work, but the Quintet presents a fuller view of it than do previous works. And both gnosticism and psychoanalysis have a direct impact on the love of Constance and Affad.

Other couples who represent various failed love relationships are presented on two levels. That is, the fiction of Monsieur is a way for Aubrey Blanford to write about and understand his and his friends' experiences, which are delineated in the remaining four novels of the Quintet. For example, the incestuous love of Hilary and Livia is a model for the relationship of Piers and Sylvie in Monsieur. Livia's bisexuality is used to develop Pia. Thus Blanford deals with the failure of his own marriage to Livia by creating a fiction in which he works out some of the problems: his wife's incest with her brother and her bisexuality. He also uses her mental instability. Livia's fascination with and admiration of the Nazis is not reproduced in Pia or Sylvie, but they both suffer mental breakdowns and spend much time institutionalized. Choosing Nazism is akin to being insane, it appears Durrell is saying. In addition to using Livia as a model for Pia and Sylvie, Blanford uses her promiscuity to develop Sabine. As the narrator notes near the end of Monsieur:

> But after all what was the truth about these importunate, nagging people of his, trying so hard to get born and achieve the fugitive identity of a

> penurious art; he thought long and sadly of his dark wife Livia. Crumbs of her had been used for Sabine (the looks and the slashing style) and for Pia, and even a certain disposition of the eyebrows (when she was lying) which was one of the features he "saw" every time he put down the name of Sylvie. (281-2)

Blanford has used more than the physical features of Livia for his characters; he has also used her personality. It is noteworthy that Livia is dark. Her sister, Constance, is blond. The two sisters represent darkness and light or, in other terms, ignorance and knowledge.

Thus *Monsieur* demonstrates the destructive side of love mainly through its examination of the triangles of Piers, Sylvie, and Bruce; and Sutcliffe, Pia, and Trash. The four remaining novels of the Quintet offer a variety of failed relationships, including those which involve incest and bisexuality. For example, all the following characters suffer because of love: Blanford, Livia, Constance, Felix Chatto, Affad, Sylvie, Sutcliffe, Nancy Quiminal, and the Princess. Few characters achieve even the possibility of beneficial love. They are Constance and Affad, Constance and Blanford, and possibly the Prince and Princess.

Most of the love relationships, in particular the key ones, are developed as a result of an attempt to understand two characters: Livia and Constance. Both sisters have a variety of relationships involving love and sex, but only Constance gives and receives beneficial love. The Quintet is an examination of the sisters' failures and successes in love, and this examination is conducted on two levels: the sisters are looked at directly, and their experiences are fictionalized by Blanford. Thus two levels of reality are presented in developing the theme of love.

Part One:

The Fictional View of Livia

In Monsieur, Blanford uses his knowledge of his wife, Livia, to develop three female characters, all with varying problems regarding love and sexuality. These three--Pia, Sylvie, and Sabine--are presented as most of Durrell's characters are: with a great deal of sympathy. Nevertheless, these three characters do not achieve lasting happiness in a love relationship. Their deviations from what Durrell sees as beneficial love result in suffering, both mental and physical, and death.

Pia, who is a fictional character created by Blanford, is married to Robin Sutcliffe. Pia and Sutcliffe are similar to Blanford and Livia. Like Blanford, Sutcliffe is a writer, and like Livia, Pia has homosexual impulses, which she finally acts upon. She leaves her husband for a woman, Trash. Pia's defection is not described as an act of malice; rather, it is seen as the logical outcome of her sexuality. As Bruce writes, "It was not that she was a rotten wife, either, for they loved each other to distraction; it was simply the sad story of inversion--it left him high and dry without inner resources" (Monsieur 9). As in previous works, homosexuality or bisexuality is seen as unfortunate although not particularly unusual. And although it appears that homosexuality is in many ways natural, it is still seen as preventing positive love. When Bruce thinks about his marriage to Sylvie, he comments:

> Nobody likes being a homosexual, just as nobody likes being a negro or a Jew. The marriage was only another mask for the hold I had on her brother through his affections. And yet love is a real thing--perhaps the only real thing in this bereft world. And yet how to achieve the only sort which is viable, enriching--one with no sanctions, no reservations, one without guilt? (Monsieur 22)

Clearly guilt-free and enriching love, according to Bruce, does not develop in a homosexual relationship. And throughout Durrell's fiction, not a single practicing homosexual or bisexual achieves beneficial love.

Pia's choice of Trash shatters her husband, but Sutcliffe already has within him the notion that love causes pain. In his notebooks he has written, "Sorrow is implicit in love as gravitation is implicit in mass" (Monsieur 89). Love, for Sutcliffe, is not a path to knowledge but to pain. The reason for his painful love is, in addition to his wife's bisexuality, the inequities in their relationship. Ironically, Sutcliffe blames freedom for the difficulties people have with love: "'In our age too much freedom has destroyed the fragile cobweb which gave the great human attachments their form and substance--their truth'" (Monsieur 91-2). Thinking of love as a "fragile cobweb" indicates that Sutcliffe considers it to be a trap; freedom--sexual or otherwise--has weakened the ability of the cobweb to hold its victims. This view is a negative one, and it runs counter to the view of beneficial love that Durrell advocates, which is that love itself is freeing and enables one to achieve self-knowledge and happiness.

Sutcliffe's view of love becomes a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy: he believes that love wounds, and so he enters a marriage that inevitably causes great grief for both spouses. But it is not solely Pia's sexuality that causes the problem. Another reason is Sutcliffe's sexuality, which he begins to understand after he discusses his wife's case with Freud. After learning about Pia's analysis, Sutcliffe analyzes himself. He is captivated by Freud's description of love as "'an investment of libido'" (Monsieur 180), and he realizes one of his reasons for being attracted to Pia:

> Reading up a bit of this extraordinary lore he began to see some of the reasons behind his own choice of an investment in Pia--the shadow of another comparable inversion. What he had admired sexually in her was that she looked so boyish. (Monsieur 180)

Sutcliffe himself is harbouring vestigial homosexual tendencies. Thus the possiblity of his finding beneficial love is remote. The possibility is made more remote by the fact that he is attracted not only to the maleness in Pia but also to her boyishness. Even in homosexual terms, Sutcliffe does not see his wife as an equal but as a child.

Homosexual sex is, of course, sterile, and this sterility is a major reason for the unhappiness visited upon participants in this kind of sex. Whatever reduces or eliminates creativity or creation is bad in Durrell's fiction and is inevitably criticised and sometimes punished. The relationships of Pia with both her husband and Trash are characterized by their sterility. For example, Sutcliffe and his wife never have children, but Pia does have a large collection of dolls that she hides from her spouse. When he discovers them, he destroys them, and along with the dolls his wife's mind is destroyed. Pia is too much of a child to be a parent; the dolls symbolize her ever-present childhood. Sutcliffe writes:

> But when I saw the dolls I seemed at once to recognise my real rivals and an overwhelming rage seized hold of me. "So that is how it is, " I said, and all the bile of old sterile disputes rose in my throat. I did not clearly know precisely what I had divined in this infantile display, but I knew with certainty that these little homunculi must be put out of the way. They constituted an obstacle to our relationship. (*Monsieur* 221)

Pia never has a chance to grow up: Sutcliffe takes her from her exclusive and sheltered Swiss finishing school when she is young, before she has a chance to mature. As he says, one of the reasons he is attracted to her is her resemblance to a boy. Such an attraction does not make for a healthy, equal, love relationship.

The sterility of Pia and Trash's sexual encounters is captured in the description of their love-making inside the carcasses of oxen:

> Huge sides of oxen were delivered to the house in the Via Caravi, whole beefs split down the middle. In these bloody cradles they would lie and make love while the men in blood-stained aprons stood around and jeered. [Sutcliffe] could see the pale Pia like Venus Anadyomene in a thoroughly contemporary version of Botticelli lying pale and exhausted in a crucible of red flesh with the black glossy body of Trash looming over her. (Monsieur 182)

This view of sex parodies birth: Pia and Trash are in "bloody cradles," but no offspring will be produced to fill the cradles. The derision of the men who are watching adds to the negative atmosphere. And the comparison of Pia to Venus, a goddess who was not associated with fertility, accentuates the sterility of their sexual activity.

The fates of Pia, Trash, and Sutcliffe fit the way they have lived their lives in accordance to love and sex. Pia goes through lengthy psychoanalysis and treatment after her dolls are ruined, and when she appears to be ready to leave the care of her doctors, she decides that her life is with Trash. Ironically she decides to do for Trash what Sutcliffe did for her: travel around the world together. Trash reveals this plan to him after she has seduced him. It is notable that Pia feels she must ask Sutcliffe for permission to go. As Trash says, "'We only want you to say YES, because she won't do nothing without your okay; you know that, Robin. But if you jes say yes we can start collecting the guidebooks and planning. It will save her mentation, honey, just to be told "Go Ahead"'" (Constance 339). Pia is still acting as a child, afraid to take responsibility for her own life.

Pia's trip with Trash enacts the one she had with Sutcliffe, but shortly after they reach Angkor Wat, the place Sutcliffe says marks the spot where he and Pia were really in love, Trash falls ill and dies. Sutcliffe remarks:

> I think that she knew that Lokesvara held the secret to our lives--it was there, curiously enough, that we had really loved each other. You know the Chinese fancy that one has two birthplaces--one the real physical one, and one which is a place of predilection, the place in which one was psychically born. Our love was born in the upper terraces of the Bayon. . . . Here she took my hand and held on to it like a terrified child. (Monsieur 257)

Taking Trash to the Bayon can be seen as a kind of defilement of the love that Pia and Sutcliffe believe they once had. Therefore, Trash must die, and Pia must suffer. A homosexual union cannot be treated in the same manner as a heterosexual one.

The importance of Angkor Wat can be seen also by its physical description: "The five-coned towers form a quincunx . . ." (Monsieur 259). The truth of love lies at the heart of the quincunx shape, just as the Templar treasure lies at the heart of one, and just as the Quintet itself offers a truth at the centre of its quincunxial shape.

The sexual problems of Sutcliffe and Pia are likely a result of individual insecurity and lack of self-knowledge. Pia is very much a child, but Sutcliffe, too, is quite dependent because he is an artist, according to Bruce. After reading Sutcliffe's papers, Bruce writes:

> It would be a charity to find one's way through this labyrinth of concealed motives, and doubtless this is what Sutcliffe's unfinished book set out to do; but either the material proved too prolix and too contradictory for him, or the simple defection of Pia robbed him of the necessary strength to create. The greater the artist the greater the emotional weakling, the greater the infantile dependence on love. Of course I am only paraphrasing in my own words what he himself has written over and over again. (Monsieur 171)

Sutcliffe's words, paraphrased by Bruce, bolster his negative view of love and make it impossible for him to achieve beneficial love. Because he has the wrong view of love, he cannot see love as anything but destructive. And for him it is. Bruce also notes about his brother-in-law:

> Afterwards, when love left him in the lurch and he became the wounded man who was such a trial to all of us, he took refuge in a laughter and cynicism which were far from his real nature--a secretive one. He had at last discovered that love had no pith in it, and that the projection of one's own feelings upon the image of the beloved was in the long run an act of self-mutilation. (Monsieur 111)

Evidently one of the fundamental problems with destructive love is not seeing accurately either the object of one's love or oneself. This failure in knowledge creates pain through misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Loving incorrectly is dangerous; it ruptures rather than repairs.

The purpose of love is to bring people together. Even Sutcliffe with his misguided view of love recognizes the importance of its unifying power. When he is alone in Venice and remembering the past he thinks, "But in the final analysis it was not landscape that irked him by its presence or absence. It was lack of company, lack of love" (Monsieur 181). He is aware that loneliness can destroy people. As he writes in his notebooks:

> To feast on loneliness--it is too rich a diet for a man like me. Yet I have had to put up with it. Piers said: "People who can no longer fall in love can simply pine away, go into a decline, and select unconsciously a disease which will do the work of a pistol." He is not wrong. Despite the new found freedoms the area of misunderstandings about love remains about the same. The act is a psychic one; the flesh simply obeys with its convulsion-therapy and amnesia. Yes, but now that the young have at last, thanks to Marie Stopes, found the key to the larder, it will be apple tart and cream for breakfast every day, and cakes and ale all night. (Monsieur 231)

Sutcliffe's original end followed Piers' prediction: after Pia leaves for good, he stops writing and moves into the house

> of an "angel maker" as the ironists of the town called those old crones who took in unwanted or illegitimate

> children for a small fee, and with an unwritten, unspoken guarantee to turn them into "angels" in a very few months by ill-treating them and literally starving them to death. (Monsieur 16)

He fails to take care of himself. He drinks excessively, takes drugs, and doesn't wash. Bruce learns from Toby that Sutcliffe "had deliberately taken to wetting his bed at nights now, gloating over the deliberately infantile act, rubbing his nose in it so to speak. . . . Even when it came to the act of defecation he chose to smear paper and fingers alike" (Monsieur 16-17). Sutcliffe's regression is a reaction to the loss of Pia and any kind of meaningful adult existence in Durrellian terms. By adopting an infantile trait--a fascination with body wastes--and by moving into a house where children regularly die, Sutcliffe is perversely modelling himself on and placing himself in close proximity to what he cannot have because of the failure of his love: a child.

Although Sutcliffe has homosexual leanings, he, like Bruce, believes that heterosexual sex is preferable. He writes:

> The act of sexual congress as the spirit-developer, the idea-hatcher is the source of all science, all art, all information which the spirit needs as its aliment. Psychic growth is nurtured by it. Purifier of mind, sharpener of intuition, procurer of the future. But to fulfil itself and do its job it must be part of a double act, a chiming act. It is strongest when practiced by the beast with two backs. (Monsieur 262)

But Sutcliffe, like several other characters in the novels, does not view sex as simply physical. Like the Quartet, the Quintet is trying to establish sexual love as a psychic act, as a way of knowing another person but not just in physical terms.

In the revised version of what happens to Sutcliffe, he does not ride his horse off the bridge, nor does he give up writing. Instead he collaborates with his creator. But he is caught between two worlds or planes of existence. He is introduced on one level, which turns out to be a plane of fiction within another work of fiction. Yet even when he is perceived as being on the first level, he is still ultimately controlled by Blanford. Just as he was caught by the cobweb of love, Sutcliffe is trapped by the web of narrative.

Pia, Trash, and Sutcliffe form one major triangle in the Quintet; the other is made up of Bruce, Piers, and Sylvie. Livia provides the inspiration for Sylvie's madness and incest. The triangle of Bruce, Piers, and Sylvie is not identical to that of Pia, Trash, and Sutcliffe; but it does illustrate other problems of personality that negatively affect love and sex. The key problems are Sylvie's madness, the incestuous relationship of Piers and Sylvie, and Piers' gnosticism.

The reason for Sylvie's madness is never given clearly, but there is a very strong suggestion that it results from her inability to free herself from the influence of her brother and that it is exacerbated by the

the triangular relationship she lives in. Bruce says that the relationship is the foundation of his life: "Indeed there was nothing else in my life to which I could compare it in fruitfulness and intensity--a three-cornered love, ill-starred only because one day Sylvie lost her reason and almost dragged her brother with her" (Monsieur 9). But Bruce is not sexually involved with Piers, and so he does not feel the conflict that Sylvie does. Bruce's love is straightforward and true whereas both Piers and Sylvie have tainted their love through their incest. In addition, Piers has another object of his attention and affection: gnosticism. Thus, it is appropriate that Bruce suffers and survives, Sylvie survives but is intermittently mad and eventually has an affair with Constance who leaves her, and Piers dies as a result of the gnostic death pact.

In a fragment of his autobiography, which he sends to Bruce, Piers describes himself and the triangle:

> "Everything, both the best and the worst, came to him because of his sister in the first instance--for he tried to avoid loving her without avail. This was his greatest single experience, and yet he always felt that it conferred a limitation on his growth--until, that is, he visited Egypt and became a gnostic disciple of the thinker Akkad. The only other love in his life was for a man who loved him with a dispassionate singleness of intent--and who also loved his sister. The three of them could hardly tell themselves apart, became a sort of congeries of loving emotions, all mutually complementary. None of this was achieved without a tremendous struggle against their sense of rightness, logic, even appropriateness.

> They won, but it severed them from the world, and yet they lived a quasi-worldly life for years, which had little reality outside the company of each other. A happy trinity of lovers. Or so he makes bold to claim." (*Monsieur* 42-3)

But the "trinity" cannot be totally happy. Piers has entered into a gnostic death pact that will take him away from Bruce and Sylvie at a time determined by others. As we learn at the beginning of *Monsieur*, Piers' death occurs a short time before the three are to be reunited for the rest of their lives. And Piers knows that his gnosticism will separate him from those he loves. Piers' contradictory nature is seen in his embrace of a religion that eliminates his goal of retiring with Bruce and Sylvie.

Both Piers and Sylvie remove themselves from a situation that provides them with extreme conflict: Piers through death and Sylvie through madness. That there is conflict is evident in Piers' autobiography and in the comments of others. Sabine says, "'You are not real, you are figments of yourselves, love on all fours, *amour à quatre pattes*. The conventional *menage à trois* reversed'" (*Monsieur* 110). As is demonstrated in the novels, not being real is the source of much grief and despair. Sutcliffe points out another flaw in the relationship:

> Piers and Sylvie have a little the air of people who have played safe from selfishness, remaining deliberately childless. They are a little like babes in the wood, somewhat lost in this rambling house and straggling grounds

> of a property which they neglect owing to an ignorance of country strategies. The third babe is Bruce, and this adds singularity to the scene, though the whole matter is treated with a completely natural unselfconsciousness which makes it seem as simple as a prism. (*Monsieur* 211-212)

> In further meditations upon the unholy trinity they form, I had a sudden small gleam of light. I suddenly saw the underlying unity of the three children as a total *self*, or the symbol of such an abstraction. Against the traditional duality figure of our cosmology I placed a triune self, composed of two male and one female partner--a gnostic notion, if I remembered correctly. (*Monsieur* 214)

The desire to remain children explains the closing-off of the rest of the world and the lack of their own children. Piers, Bruce, and Sylvie inhabit a fantasy world in which they can do what they wish as long as it doesn't involve personal responsibility. Sylvie hands over her responsibility to her doctors, and Piers hands his to gnosticism. Piers is attracted to gnosticism because "'it's like falling in love'" (*Monsieur* 94). He can be swept away on a wave of belief. Bruce escapes the grim fates of these two characters because he is so naive and unaware. And he exhibits some signs of responsibility. For example, he marries Sylvie because she is pregnant although no one knows who the father is. Her subsequent miscarriage follows the pattern of loss in Durrell's novels: fetuses are miscarried or aborted, and children are lost or die in order to avoid an inhospitable environment.

Sylvie's relapse on the death of Piers is another example of her inability to take responsibility for her life. As Toby says:

> "One thing is sure, Piers had received his laissez-passer and was waiting for the blow to fall. He must have confided in Sylvie, hence her relapse, her conflict, for she would have wanted to go with him and at the same time stay with you. Her relapse was a compromise which absolved her of refusing to choose." (Monsieur 247)

Such a response has been the pattern with Sylvie. Instead of following either her brother or husband around the world, she stays at Verfeuille, waiting for their visits. But when Piers dies, the pattern is irrevocably broken, and she collapses.

Thus, the breaking of the trinity destroys the mental capacity of one of its survivors. The remaining healthy survivor, Bruce, has fantasies about killing Sylvie, fantasies that are obviously a desire to free himself from the shackles of a no longer viable marriage. Bruce refers to the effect of Sylvie's madness in sexual terms:

> The quasi-death of insanity with its small periodic remissions, its deviations into good sense, even into brilliant insight, was almost more cruel really than outright death. In my own case it seemed gradually to have worn me out emotionally--the word castration does not sound too exaggerated in the context. (Monsieur 20)

The love that Piers, Sylvie, and Bruce have for each other is not beneficial love: all three are hurt to varying degrees. Their closed system is not enough to sustain them, but they are incapable of opening it up.

The exclusivity of the trinity is discussed by several of the characters, but the most telling comments are made in relation to Sabine, whom Bruce does not like. Both Sutcliffe and Sabine cannot imagine a love that does not include jealousy. Sabine has declined to marry Sutcliffe because, as she says, "'I have never been able to envisage a love without jealousy and exclusiveness, and have never dared to risk the business'" (_Monsieur_ 110). Sutcliffe questions the love of Bruce, Sylvie, and Piers by saying, "In the heart of the matter, too, I seem to detect a romantic fraud--for can love exist in any dimension without jealousy? (_Monsieur_ 207). When Bruce first meets Sabine, he is jealous of her friendship with Piers: "She was an unforgettable sight that first evening and I watched her curiously and rather jealously, so evident was Piers' attachment for her" (_Monsieur_ 65). Bruce is also envious of Sabine's sexual freedom. Piers points out to him: "'I think that you really envy her, because she makes love _à tous les quatres vents_ without ascribing an absolute value to the act: whereas we three are in the grip of an infatuation which goes on and on'" (_Monsieur_ 112). The trinity of lovers has lost something by its exclusivity, according to Piers, and it has not escaped feelings of jealousy and envy.

Sabine represents the promiscuous side of Livia, and although there are several attractive traits about Sabine that draw people to her, her fate implies that her treatment of love and sex is wrong. Besides contracting sexually transmitted diseases regularly, Sabine eventually loses all of her children to disease, and she herself falls victim to cancer. The sexual freedom that Sabine enjoys does not offer her lasting peace or happiness: sex actually appears divorced from emotion for her. Such an attitude does not show the proper respect for sex, and Sabine herself holds views that contradict her behaviour. In particular she "understood perfectly that man and woman were a single animal tragically divided by Plato; that it was a notion of the Muses" (Monsieur 199). Sabine's promiscuity discounts the singularity and uniqueness of the tragically divided animal that she believes in.

As the centre of the quincunx, Monsieur provides the narrative framework for the quintet, and it contains the thematic framework. Livia is used as a model for the three main female characters in Monsieur--Pia, Sylvie, and Sabine--who exemplify incorrect attitudes to love. But Monsieur also contains suggestions of a more positive and healthy view of love through the character of Akkad and his gnostic beliefs.

At Macabru Akkad introduces his friends to his views. Bruce, who does not embrace them as Piers does, is fascinated by the new understanding of love that Akkad offers.

> It was through this experience with Akkad and his sect that I at last managed to gain a foothold in that part of reality which was probably my own inner self. It may sound strange, but I now understand the nature of my love--and also the nature of human love as a whole. I saw quite unmistakably that man had set aside his natural periodicity of sexuality and so forfeited his partnership with the animal kingdom. This was his central trauma, and it also signalled the final loss of his powers over the matter--that was coming . . . (Monsieur 120)

Bruce says he understands this point of view, yet he doesn't try to follow it. So he is left with the confusion and unhappiness of the trinity.

Akkad's statement of the role of love and sex is even more direct than Bruce's report. He says:

> Naturally having lost the marvellous amnesia of sexual periodicity we live by a time-pining, time-bound, chronology. And we never forget that death sets in with conception. This alters everything, even an element like love. We are making the orgasm more and more conscious. Yet to have loved capably and methodically, to have loved with a sufficiency of attention for the fragility of the thought and the transitoriness of the act--that will teach anyone the truth of what I say about death. . . . There is a way to comprehend the gnostic's giant onion of a world, the concentric circles, with the Pleroma beckoning there, the white heart of light, the source of that primal vision which for a second or two can recapture paradise. We can make amends by loving correctly. (Monsieur 142-3)

Akkad's words are reminiscent of the view of love, sex, and death presented in previous novels of Durrell, but his statement is more straightforward. Gnosticism, however, is not being advocated by Durrell. It is being presented as a balance to Christianity, but no system of thought or belief is regarded as privileged. What is important is knowledge and unity. Through the presentation of Pia, Sylvie, and Sabine, the fictional counterparts of Livia, Durrell shows the pitfalls of a lack of self-knowledge. Instead of unity, these characters, and the male characters involved with them, suffer isolation, both mental and physical, and unhappiness. Not one has loved correctly, to use Akkad's words; and so the result is not amends but further destruction.

Part Two:

The Direct Presentation of Livia

Livia embodies the three sexual problems--incest, bisexuality, and homosexuality--of the three characters she provides a model for. In addition Livia's commitment to the Nazi cause reflects a basic failure of understanding. However, even though Livia has all these problems and causes a great deal of pain, both to others and herself, like all of Durrell's characters she is ultimately treated with great sympathy. She is, perhaps, the best example in Durrell's fiction of love gone wrong.

According to Constance, Livia's behaviour results from their upbringing, but Constance cannot determine why Livia and she adopted such different routes when they were raised in the same atmosphere. Blanford recalls asking

Livia about her mother, and her reaction was to look "at him with those dark eyes gone like dead snails" (Livia 65). The image of dead eyes is significant, for it shows a lack of feeling and lack of insight on the part of Livia. She refuses to discuss her parents, but Blanford manages to gain some details about their mother from Constance, who writes:

> "She had always been avid for the meretricious, and when her shallow beauty faded everything turned to hate--but chiefly against her children because of their own youthful beauty. . . . Soon she felt herself swelling with pure malevolence, a loathing strong enough to carry, she hoped, even beyond the grave, to blight our lives, to maim our spirits! She complained that her breasts were flaccid because she nursed us too long . . . We have had to wade through all this powerfully projected hate without quite understanding it--except now, retrospectively. Forgiving it is another thing. Look at Livia!" (Livia 65-6)

But Constance cannot understand why the two sisters have different reactions to the same past. After Livia succeeds in killing herself, Constance is left to try to understand why:

> Why, for example, had they not been more alike since they were brought up together by the same inadequate child-hater, deprived of the cuddling and caressing which form the self-esteem of the body so that its image can project faith and acceptance, sure of itself? This was how Constance "read" Livia when she thought of her as a case. The bitter narcissism, the jealousy, the withdrawn and melancholy character had evolved out of this background which Constance had shared with her; Hilary much less, for he had been sent away.

(Constance 252)

The lack of love in their childhood has resulted in two very different people, but Constance is quite unaware at this point of Livia's incestuous love for Hilary.

She analyzes Livia's homosexual activity as stemming from their mother's treatment of them: "the total narcissism which is expressed in inversion derives from the sense of abandon by the mother. But crueller still, the sexual drive which alone satisfies it consists of a mock incest precisely with her abandoner" (Livia 67). However, unknown to her sister, Livia is committing real incest with Hilary. Their relationship is hinted at when Hilary is jealous of the attention Livia receives from Blanford and Felix: "only when Livia appeared did Hilary seem to take on a new constraint, his ice-blue eyes became evasive and thoughtful as he watched both Felix and Blanford foundering like ships in a gale" (Livia 101). Hilary's "ice-blue eyes" like Livia's, which are compared to dead snails, show a paucity of life-giving emotion. Both Hilary and Livia have been maimed emotionally, and the wounds are shown in their eyes. The maiming is also demonstrated by their incest. Their relationship is made clear when the maid smells Hilary's pillow and says "'Mademoiselle Livia'" (Livia 102). But Constance is unaware of her siblings' incest until after they are both dead.

In addition to revealing the incest to her, Smirgel, who has a tape recording of a conversation between Livia and Hilary, also discloses that Livia was jealous of Constance. On the tape Livia says to Hilary, "'You only settled for me because Constance was not available--she was in love with Aubrey: but it was she you really loved, really wanted!'" (Quinx 126). Livia is suffering from the rejection of her mother and the feeling that her brother is merely making do with her because Constance will not have him. Jealous of her sister, she is cut off from the people who should provide her with love and security: her family. Instead she is victimized by both her mother and brother and driven away from her sister. Her father is significant only by his absence, and thus he has no positive effect on his children.

Smirgel blames Hilary for ruining Livia. He tells Constance:

> "I don't suppose that it was the first time in history that a brother seduced his sister sexually--but unhappily it affected me. I realised from what she revealed to me that in fact Hilary was responsible for shaking her affective stability with this unlucky passion which neither could renounce. . . . All other relations were worthless to her while her brother lived and breathed. . . I was filled with vengeful thoughts, and indeed at long last, and quite by chance, fate made it possible to execute them." (Quinx 119)

Smirgel uses his position as a double spy to trap Hilary. In fact he uses Livia as bait. His plan is to eliminate his rival. But Livia cannot live if Hilary does not: forced to watch his execution, she stabs herself in the eye, intending to commit suicide. Her attempt fails, but she loses her eye. Blindness in Durrell's novels is usually indicative of moral or spiritual desolation, a failure to see correctly, a void in the emotional field. Another example of this use of blindness is Von Esslin, whose blindness diminishes as he establishes rapport with Constance. The ability to generate friendship is healing: emotions of unification have a positive effect in the physical realm.

Given her past, Livia's embracing of Nazism is understandable. She has been rejected by her mother and made use of by her brother. Her jealousy of Constance eliminates the possibility of a strong bond between them, and so Livia, like Hilary, looks for something to fill the emptiness. Her sexual encounters and even her marriage are entered without any sense of commitment, but she joins the Nazis with great fervour. Hilary has a similar desire to join a regulated group: before signing up for the war and joining the Resistance, he was in the midst of taking Holy Orders. This need of both Hilary and Livia to fit in and belong appears to be the direct result of their tormented childhoods. Because Hilary was not subjected as relentlessly as Livia was to their mother's hatred, he looks for his outlet in the more socially acceptable action of becoming religious rather than becoming a Nazi. But the main point remains: both Hilary and Livia's lack of love causes them to seek love and unity through inappropriate relationships: incestuous, religious, or political liaisons that deprive them of a sense of self and make beneficial love, which they are craving, impossible.

Blanford offers Livia the possibility of a more conventional and probably more healthy relationship than she has had, but she rebels. The reason for this rejection, which Livia may not understand but which is clear given the basic view of love that Durrell is developing, is that Blanford's love for Livia is flawed. "He tried to pierce with his eyes the very real bewitchment which transformed [Livia's face]; he realised that what he saw was not Livia but his transfigured version of her--the reflection of his love" (Livia 164). He does not really see or understand Livia. When she hurls away the ring he has put on her finger, he is given a clear sign that her independence will prevent a marriage of intimacy and he acknowledges this situation: "in the heart of the matter Blanford felt the prick of sadness, of some unachieved intimacy which lay between them like a shadow" (Livia 166). Yet he still marries her, and inevitably the marriage causes pain for both of them.

Livia's personality and behaviour follow closely Freud's theories of sexuality and development. For example, Freud said:

> A child's affection for his parents is no doubt the most important infantile trace which, after being revived at puberty, points the way to his choice of an object. Other starting-points

> with the same early origin enable a man to develop more than one sexual line, based no less upon his childhood, and to lay down very various conditions for his object choice. (152)
>
> The innumerable peculiarities of the erotic life of human beings as well as the compulsive character of the process of falling in love itself are quite unintelligible except by reference back to childhood and as being residual effects of childhood. (152 below)

Livia's loveless childhood deprives her of the ability to achieve beneficial love; instead, she is locked into a vicious circle of ever-increasing destructive love and sexual relationships. The only way out is suicide.

Part Three:

Constance and the Path to Beneficial Love

Constance has three main relationships with men, two of which are terminated prematurely because of death. Unlike her sister, Constance is not emotionally destroyed by her childhood. However, even though Constance has healthy and beneficial love relationships, they are not all permanent. But the termination of the relationship is not obviously due to a flaw in the relationship, or at least, it is not due to a flaw in Constance's approach. Her training as a psychoanalyst has offered her some insight into the workings of the human personality, insight that her sister never gains. Also it must be noted that Constance is not seduced by her brother: the most abnormal sexual activity she engages in is homosexual love with Sylvie, who, after all, inhabits a different plane of reality. By examining the three main heterosexual relationships in Constance's life, we gain a fuller understanding of Durrell's notion of beneficial love.

The first important man in Constance's life is Sam, whom she marries just before he goes off to war. The contrast between a healthy and a destructive attachment can be seen in Sam's recognition that there is something wrong with Livia. Blanford is surprised to discover that Sam does not find Livia attractive: "he was not so much wounded as astonished when the youthful Sam described [Livia's] eyes like dead fish-eyes and her hair as dandruffy, adding that he could never care for a girl like that. The angle of vision is everything" (Livia 66). The description of Livia's eyes as "dead fish-eyes" shows Sam's sensitivity to the emotional void in her.

At an early age both Sam and Constance have come to grips with the reality of death. After receiving his recall notice for armed duty, Sam thinks: "He had suddenly started to realise that he was now dying, quite softly dying. Mind you it would take time, but it was quite irrevocable" (Livia 248). Sam is helped to this view by Constance:

> This whole absurd and mysterious business had been sparked off by a simple conversation in which the girl had said, "It will seem to you quite mad but from early on in my adolescence I seemed to have set myself a sort of task. I was trying to want only what happened, and to part with things without regret. It made me sort of on

> equal terms with death--I realised that it did not exist. I felt I had begun to participate in the inevitable. I knew then what bliss was. I started to live in a marvellous parenthesis. I also knew that it wasn't right to know so much so young." (Livia 248)

For no apparent reason, Constance has come to view life in a way entirely different from that of Livia. Once Constance has dispensed with a fear of death, it is evident that the importance of the pain of her childhood is lessened. Thus she is able to carry on and live a more balanced and full life than her sister.

Sam goes off to war, only to discover that he loves it. This love of the war displaces his love for Constance. He even feels he is being unfaithful to her. He tells Blanford, "'I feel a complete traitor to Constance, to all she believes in, to all we both believed in. . . . You see, I don't hate the war at all, I like it. . . . Beside [battle], love-making is a charming adventure, nothing more'" (Constance 72-3). He plans to stay in the army for life; ironically, he does, but only because he dies shortly after. And to add further irony, he is not killed when he is fighting but accidentally when he is on a picnic.

Sam's death teaches Constance two things: one is that death is fearful and does have a profound effect. She learns that they were unrealistic about the power of their love:

> The truth was that she was still in a state of semi-shock, almost collapse,

> due to the news of Sam's death. It was simply amazing--for they had both imagined that they were strong enough to face up to such an eventuality, that the life-giving power of their magnetic love would resist even this sort of separation. Love makes you naive, she realised it now; they had been acting a part, the part of two golden immortals from some romantic opera. (*Constance* 118)

She also learns that second chances do not always happen. While Sam is away, she discovers that she is pregnant and has an abortion. With the loss of Sam, she realizes the importance of the child she could have had and the importance of death. Because Constance and Sam are unrealistic about the power of death, they are given a strong lesson. Sam dies, and Constance suffers because of his death and the termination of her pregnancy.

Sam's death can also be seen as a punishment for replacing the love of a woman with love of war. In Durrell's work, creativity is of the utmost importance, so when Sam discovers that he prefers the path of destruction, the penalty is great. His death also works into another theme: that of the impossibility of being detached from the world. There are actions in life, such as war, which have a great effect on people's lives, and they cannot be ignored. Individuals exist in a society, and that society determines to some extent the parameters of behaviour. In a way, Durrell has increasingly broadened his focus from the insularity of the "English death" of the early novels to the massive destruction in the

Quintet. As Ian MacNiven points out:

> Durrell has been continually expanding the scope of his novels. While both the individual and his society have always been of concern, the emphasis has shifted in the direction of numerically larger groups. Thus, The Black Book emphasizes the individual, The Quartet the individual plus the primal love group as defined by Freud, The Revolt of Aphrodite the individual plus the love group plus the corporation, and so far [1980] the Quincunx has treated all of the above plus western society in a broad historical context. ("Steps to Livia . . . " 341)

The scope of love changes also and is broadened to include a more comprehensive Eastern perspective, which is developed through Affad.

Constance's Egyptian lover, Affad, provides the novel with an insight into Eastern views of love and sex, which are presented as being positive. But on the negative side, Affad is a member of a gnostic death pact. Because he has chosen death over life, his chance for happiness with Constance is lost. Even though he is murdered before the group can carry out the arrangements for his death, he must die because of his faulty view of life. And the fact that he does not die as the result of his arranged pact indicates a criticism of such an anti-life view as gnosticism. Thus, through Affad and Constance, Durrell shows the potential in combining Eastern and Western views, but because of Affad's gnostic beliefs, the love cannot last. Like Sam, Affad destroys his chances for happiness by allowing another system or belief to supercede the role of love in his life.

The relationship of Constance and Affad also illustrates the importance of procreation. One of the ways that Affad offends the gnostic brotherhood is to consider having a child with Constance. He tells the Prince, "'What would you say, I wonder, if you knew that I had been trying to make her pregnant--to face total and irrevocable disaster, so to speak, which would have united us definitively'" (Sebastian 3). Gnosticism advocates the ultimate separation: death. Creating a child is the antithesis of this view as it means creating life.

Mixed in with Affad's gnostic views are Taoist ones on love and sex. For example he says, "'[F]ucking is just the cement which binds together the double image we present to reality when an orgasm is shared, is reciprocally breathed'" (Sebastian 149). Their love-making is described in the following manner: "he had begun the fateful rhythm which joined their breaths to the universal pattern of breath" (Constance 266). And yet Affad breaks this shared universal breathing by reverting to the gnostic brotherhood.

After Affad's death, Constance pursues a study of love and sex in which she adds to her earlier theory about existing in a parenthesis. "She had learned that the priapic conjunction is a force-harness which builds the field in which the future, as exemplified by the human child, can secure a foothold in reality" (Quinx 14-15).

She tells Blanford:

> "Now you know what you are doing when you couple with me you will never be able to leave me--it would be dangerous for your insight! For your art, the merchandise of breath, oxygen! We've done it, darling! The orgasm if shared in this way admits you to the realm of death and rebirth, the workshop of both past and future. To grasp this simultaneity is the key. Meanwhile in between births--the orgasm is a shadow-play of this chrysalis stage--we exist in five-skanda form, aggregates, parcel, lots, congeries. They cohere to form a human being when you come together and create the old force-field quinx, the five-sided being with two arms, two legs and the kundalini as properties." (Quinx 15)

The pain that Blanford and Constance have felt in their lives is, in a sense, part of the process of readying them for benefical love with each other. They have to experience flawed loves in order to understand the nature of real love. Constance points out that after her experience with Affad she is better able to love:

> "After he died I realised, but quite slowly, that I could not love again in the old way, in the literary way, as if from a dialectical frenzy. Yet paradoxically the new freedom which came to me from his death freed me to love more truly, more correctly, while at the same time remaining my own master. (Quinx 151)

Each failed love affair provides Constance with a new insight to love. She is learning how to love correctly.

Real love in Durrell's terms is beneficial and it is closely allied to sex. Love provides a way out of the darkness into insight and understanding. Beneficial love is always spoken of in the novels in terms of unification and creation. Blanford calls the couple "the basic brick of understanding" (Quinx 55), and this is clearly Durrell's view. Love saves people, and in a rather transparent demonstration of this view, Durrell has a scene in the Quintet that is similar to one in the Quartet. Just as Darley saves Clea from drowning, so does Blanford save Constance. The rebirth imagery is inescapable, and in the case of Blanford and Constance, the near-drowning leads to their initial sexual encounter and a open admission of their love.

Beneficial love in Durrell's novels is held up to be the appropriate goal of human beings. Faulty love results in suffering and death, while beneficial love is life-enhancing and life-giving. Durrell has laid out several specific examples of incorrect love and few examples of correct love. This split indicates the difficulty of achieving beneficial love, but it is evident that the difficulty must not militate against the attempt.

Chapter Six

Splicing the Real and the Imagined in the Quintet

The Avignon Quintet continues the experimentation with narrative form that has been seen consistently throughout Durrell's fiction. But the Quintet explores completely new narrative territory compared to the previous works. In the early novels, Durrell experiments with narrative voice and the treatment of time, and he continues to vary and expand his approach in the Quartet. He also explores in _The Dark Labyrinth_ and _The Revolt of Aphrodite_ less realistic forms of narrative: allegory and science fiction. But the Quintet takes narrative into a whole new realm of plausibility and reality.

The change in Durrell's approach to narrative in the Quintet was not appreciated or even noticed by many reviewers, who were generally unenthusiastic.21 Some could see little difference between the Quartet and the Quintet, and they made objections to or endorsements of the Quintet that were similar to the comments they made on the Quartet, without realising that Durrell was doing something different. In a 1985 interview Durrell explained what he thought was different about the Quintet compared to the Quartet: "C'est les quatre dimensions contre les cinque <<ramifications>>. Ce sont deux genres de réalisation spirituelle" (Graf 19). He went on to explain that the difference is in the concept of personality determined by Eastern or Western values:

> Vous savez, les composantes de notre personnalité européenne, à travers l'histoire de la psychologie jusqu'à Freud, se situent, par facilité, entre conscient et inconscient. Pour les Hindous, pour les védantistes, pour les gens de là-bas, ces éléments sont groupés en cinq <<paniers>>, les fameuses ramifications. Donc, toutes les distinctions aristotéliciennes, par exemple, la perception, la compréhension, etc., sont groupées dans un seul élément tout à fait nébuleux, parce que la personnalité individuelle n'existe pas: elle est une invention et plus on progresse dans le yoga, plus on réalise que c'est une invention.
>
> Alors, c'est pour ça que j'ai voulu, avec ce traitement un peu tibétain du Quintette, montrer d'abord que les démarcations indiquées par notre psychologie doivent céder, un petit peu comme elles ont cédé chez Einstein. Il n'y a plus un fait, il n'y a qu'un <<point event>>. La personnalité est tout à fait illusoire. (Graf 19)

Thus Durrell's shift is fundamental: although in the Quartet characters talked about the instability of the personality, they actually demonstrated discrete and stable personalities. In the Quintet, this is no longer the case. As Ian S. MacNiven points out, "Following Durrell's plot lines, always a challenge, has not been made any easier by what I see as a new departure for him in the Quincunx novels: the breakdown of the discrete plot as well as the discrete character" (343). Personality is completely fractured, and it is done so through the narrative device of having two narrators, one an author who in turn creates another who ends up acting as the initial narrator's collaborator rather than his character. The separate personalities merge and blur: the ontological status of the characters and plot is changed, thereby offering a new consideration of the fictional representation of reality. The relative nature of reality that was presented in the Quartet has dramatically been altered in the Quintet through the narrative form.

In another interview done after the completion of Monsieur, Durrell describes what he imagines will be the different narrative structure of the Quintet:

> I was intending to go over five books this time (which sounds pretty ambitious at my age) and I was going to do a telescopic form, what the French call gigogne--you know, those clusters of tables, you open one and it opens another and you open a third and so on and so forth. And I didn't want to do it in continuum form this time, I wanted to do it straight like a telescope, not fleuve, you understand. For example, in the second volume it emerges that the first volume is not by me at all, it's by a character, one of the characters in the first. And it would be ideal if the third could be a masterpiece written by one of the characters which had a relationship to the first. And gradually the thing should become on the one hand more flou, that is to say more dispersed apparently, and much tighter in its inner organization and lie anchored on Avignon and a very small group of people. But it would open not in the Quartet sense but in a telescope sense, knuckle by knuckle so to speak. (Carley "An Interview . . . " 46)

Durrell does not keep strictly to this outline, but it does offer some insight into how he perceived the structure of the Quintet and how it differs from the

Quartet. There is a distinct difference in the relationship between the narrator(s) and other characters, which, in turn, affects the presentation of the fictional reality.

Part One: The Framework of the Quintet

In addition to being the first novel in Durrell's Quintet, *Monsieur: or the Prince of Darkness* lays the framework for the narrative form and experimentation for the other four novels, in much the same way as *Justine* does for the other three novels of the Quartet. Another similarity between *Monsieur* and earlier works is that for the most part the novels have narrators who are in search of themselves through the act of writing. As the narrator establishes his personal identity through writing, he also creates other identities and other views of reality. *Monsieur* continues Durrell's interest in narrative form by reworking reality in yet a different way from those of the previous novels.

Bruce Drexel is the narrator of most of *Monsieur*. Not until the final chapter of the novel do we learn that Bruce is a character in a novel by a writer named Blanford. Bruce Drexel is a rather conventional narrator who is self-consciously creating himself through the act of writing in his journal: "How well I remembered, how well he remembered! The Bruce that I was, and the Bruce I become as I jot down these words, a few every day" (7).

The split between the Bruce of the past and the Bruce of now is emphasised by the shift in narrative point of view at the beginning of the novel. Bruce uses both first and third person pronouns to refer to himself. Another way that he shows the differences between the various aspects of himself is to start with a familiar event: the train trip from Paris to Avignon. He compares how he felt on previous journeys to how he feels on this one. And he thinks of the attempt to integrate the Bruce of the past with the present Bruce as a process of healing:

> It is much later in the year now, when I try to reassess the meaning and value of all these episodes on paper: in search of some fruitful perspective upon my own life here in the old chateau--the queer solitary life which I have at last adopted. Scribbling all this gives me something to do, I am resetting the broken bones of the past. (17)

Like Darley and Charlock, Bruce believes that writing will help him to put his life to rights.

Like the characters in the Quartet, those in the Quintet are highly aware of the creative process of fiction, and they frequently refer to it and compare it to life. For example, regarding the reason for the train trip at the beginning of the novel--the death of Piers--Bruce writes: "He must be trying to objectify his thoughts and emotions by treating them as one would in a novel, but it didn't really work" (8). And to complicate matters, Bruce has a friend named Sutcliffe who has already written of such events in a novel: "As a matter of fact, in Rob

Sutcliffe's famous novel about us all, things began in exactly this way. I was strangely echoing his protagonist" (8). At this point in the narrative the layers of fictionality are twofold: Bruce's and Sutcliffe's. Bruce even shows a bit of pique with Sutcliffe's fictional representation of their lives.

> Later Sutcliffe was to make cruel fun of us three [Piers, Sylvie, and Bruce] in his book. "They are so happy. They admire themselves. They have invested a wedding-cake in each other. A slice under each pillow, O desirable treat. An unholy trinity of romantics, a love-sandwich with the perplexed and thick-thewed Bruce making the filling." I was glad that he was later so badly punished by my sister Pia--an ignoble emotion, but these passages were wounding. (52)

This passage shows that for Bruce at least fiction has the power to wound to such an extent that he wishes harm on the writer in retaliation. Words are powerful tools: they can wound, and they can be used to heal the wounds inflicted by life.

Bruce's novel is really his journal, and although concerned with artistic creation, Bruce does not see himself as an artist. By profession he is a doctor, and he refers to Sutcliffe as the artist. Bruce writes about himself in the third person, comparing himself to his friend:

> Bruce was now identifying a little with the hero very much as Sutcliffe himself was, and about whom the writer once said: "Reality is too old-fashioned nowadays for the writer's uses. We must

> count upon art to revive it and bring
> it up to date." (8-9)

Monsieur, along with the rest of the Quintet, is Durrell's attempt to bring the fictional representaion of reality up to date through the manipulation of narrative. The manipulation is started in *Monsieur* with Bruce's journal, which contains selections from other people's writing, and although Bruce does not perceive himself as an artist, he is concerned with problems of form and style. He realizes the difficulty of the task he has set himself, and in remarking on the shift of tense in his writing, he says in a parenthetical statement, "I notice the shift of verb tenses in these hasty notes--they throw my memories in and out of focus, as time itself and reality melts in and out of focus when you dream" (50). Bruce is not intentionally writing a novel; rather he is in a hurry to get down his ideas for self-knowledge to aid the process of healing. Yet he recognizes that how he puts down his thoughts has a bearing on those very thoughts.

The process of healing is completed through an integration of the past and present. Like Darley and Charlock, Bruce uses memory to reconstruct events to put them into perspective in the present. Much of *Monsieur* is Bruce's attempt to make sense of Piers' death, and it is this event that starts him on his quest for self-knowledge. The finality of death is inescapable and should shock people into some kind of recognition of life and the need to understand it. But even while trying to understand his life through writing it down, Bruce is aware of the problems of creation. When he thinks about Sutcliffe's ideas on writing, Bruce cannot forget the difference between the real and the imaginary:

> Yes, but what about real people as opposed to paper figments? Dying, one becomes out of date; but it brings one's friends to their senses, or should. I so often wondered about this--how to splice the real and the imagined--when I read his book. (9)

Thus Bruce articulates two important points. First of all, dying takes a person out of time: Piers remains alive in the fictional sense because Bruce writes about him, but Piers as a real person is dead. Secondly Bruce points out one of the basic problems of the writer: "how to splice the real and the imagined." In his journal, which is a record of his life and an attempt to understand the events in it, Bruce essentially concentrates on what he thinks is the real. But with his asides to Sutcliffe's fictional work, Bruce introduces the notion of the imagined. Sutcliffe has used Bruce and their other friends as models for the characters in his novels. Sutcliffe also expresses the problem of the writer. When writing about Piers, Sylvie, and Bruce, and his intention of turning them into fiction, Sutcliffe says:

> The fact of the matter is that they are irritating me profoundly by posing questions of capital interest to a novelist: namely how to render them plausible, real, for the purposes of a fiction. It wouldn't work, One [sic] would be defeated by the romantic

> content, if only because they are what they are--young and handsome. In order to seem plausible to a reader they would have to seem real to me--and they baffle me. If I changed their characters, however, it is possible I could make the whole thing more convincing. (215-6)

This passage is reminiscent of Death Gregory's observation, "Everything is plausible here, because nothing is real" (The Black Book 40). Fictional reality for both Sutcliffe and Death Gregory depends on the manipulation of reality into fictional plausibility. Gregory fails to write anything but his diary. Sutcliffe apparently overcomes the problem because we know he has written a novel in which Bruce recognizes himself. But Sutcliffe ultimately succumbs to the same difficulty as Gregory does. He ends up unable to write about his own life in fictional terms. All he can do is make notes and leave scraps of narrative.

In the present time frame of Bruce's portion of the novel, which is just after Piers' death, Bruce is uniquely suited to delve into the past to piece it all together. He has access to Piers' papers because Piers was his brother-in-law. He also has access to Rob Sutcliffe's papers because Rob also was a brother-in-law, and he left many papers at the de Nogaret chateau. So just as Justine includes the writing of others and therefore others' conceptions of reality, so does Monsieur. Chapter One concentrates on the immediate events: the trip to Avignon and the death of Piers. However, Bruce offers a few glimpses into the past by mentioning Akkad and Piers' interest in gnosticism, a belief that may have played an important role in his death. Sylvie, Piers' sister, believes that gnosticism had a great influence on her brother. When Bruce goes to visit Sylvie, she comes out of her madness briefly, and one of the things she says is "Everything that happened began at Macabru, you know that. Piers knew it. Macabru changed everything" (90-91). Macabru is where Piers learns about gnosticism, and because this event of the past is so important, Bruce devotes most of the second chapter to an explanation of what happened at Macabru.

Near the end of the chapter, Bruce shifts the commentary from a straight recital of the past to an analysis of how Sutcliffe may also have tried to make sense of the past.

> It would be a charity to find one's way through this labyrinth of concealed motives, and doubtless this is what Sutcliffe's unfinished book first set out to do; but either the material proved too prolix and too contradictory for him, or the simple defection of Pia robbed him of the necessary emotional strength to create.
>
> It has done me good to put so much down on paper, though I notice in the very act of recording things one makes them submit to a kind of ordering which may be false, proceeding as if causality was the real culprit. Yet the element of chance, of accident, had so much to do with what became of us that it seems impossible to search out first causes--which is perhaps what led to the defeat of Rob in his fight with his last book. (171-2)

That Bruce is rather a linear thinker is demonstrated by the movement in the third chapter, which contains Sutcliffe's notes, probably his notes for the novel that he couldn't finish. Near the end of Chapter Two Bruce comments on the failed attempt:

> Thus Sutcliffe writing about himself; out of the inexplicable confusion of the Venice notebooks some sort of self-portrait does emerge; but he tried out several tones of voice and found none to fit his mood and theme. He was proposing to write about himself, to make himself the central character of his own book, but never quite found how to situate the Sutcliffe of his invention squarely in the realm which his creator inhabited. The resulting manuscript is indeed something of a puzzle, for almost before he could get the book started his "characters", that is to say Piers, Toby, Sylvie, and myself started to look over his shoulder, so to speak, and talk for themselves. He felt at once elated by the thought that he had discovered a possible impressionistic form for his book, and depressed by the incoherence in which his subjects existed. (174)

Bruce's comments are extremely important because they capture not only Sutcliffe's failure, but Blanford's success. What Sutcliffe was stumped by, Blanford managed to turn to good advantage: he let his characters "look over his shoulder" and "talk for themselves." The inclusion of Chapter Three, "Sutcliffe's Venetian Documents," can therefore be seen as the raw material or a stage of development in the creation of a fiction. Sutcliffe's failure to complete the novel results from his inability to "splice the real and the imagined."

The various tones in Sutcliffe's notes create an effect similar to the kaleidoscopic one of Justine and the other novels of the Quartet and to that of Bruce's own narration. Chapter Three is made up of fragments of stories in which Sutcliffe often writes about himself in the third person. This device is a transparent attempt to gain some distance on the events, but as Bruce says, it is likely that the events so wounded Sutcliffe that he could not get them out of the personal realm. Sutcliffe also writes about professional jealousy. He mentions a writer named Bloshford, who is very popular, whose "books sold like pies" (178). Bloshford is a parody of Blanford, but of course that little twist is not clear until the end of the novel. This section also includes comments by Sutcliffe on writing, and one in particular is significant in light of the rest of the Quintet:

> Trying to explain to Piers that the stream of consciousness is composed of all too painfully conscious bits with the links suppressed; free association does the hop skip and jump along these points, behaving like quanta. He will not believe that the art form of the age is not the diary anymore but the case-history. Anyway stream of consciousness is a misnomer, suggesting something flowing between banks. Milky Way would be more accurate. Consciousness is a smear. (233)

In subsequent novels of the Quintet, the case-history becomes very important, and with the publication of novels such as D.M. Thomas' The White Hotel, the role of the case-history in fiction is firmly established. Sutcliffe comments accurately on writing in this century in the aftermath of psychoanalysis.

Like Justine, this chapter also includes portions of letters, notably a long letter from Akkad in which he sets forth his gnostic philosophy. Once Sutcliffe turns from discussing his friends' lives in the guise of fiction to a discussion of his own, in particular the breakup of his marriage because of his wife's homosexual affair, the pronouns shift from third to first person, and the writing takes on the style of a confession.

In Chapter Four, Bruce very briefly resumes his own narrative while paying his debt to the other writers whose work he has borrowed: "Sutcliffe's papers, his letters from Pia; from the Duchess, and from other people in his life" (235). Bruce is staying at the chateau with his friend Toby, and they are both engaged in the act of fashioning a reality through the manipulation of words. While Bruce works on his journal and reads the works of his friends, Toby does research on the Templars for a book he has been working on for years. As Reed Way Dasenbrock notes, this section

> moves forward to the time of the novel's opening and Sutcliffe's narration in the previous section is revealed to be what Bruce is reading in Avignon after Piers's death while living with Sutcliffe's friend Toby. Bruce is reading, sifting, and deciphering these documents in an attempt to understand Piers's death. Toby is also working with documents, continuing his life-long investigation

> into the mystery of the Templars. As the first famous ancestor of Piers was involved in their downfall, Toby's interpretive labor is curiously parallel to Bruce's. One is studying the appearance of the family, the other its disappearance. This theme of deciphering texts and mysteries which dominates this section of Monsieur contributes to the novel a sense that everything must be scrutinized, as all appearances are misleading and the truth of any matter is obscure. ("Death and the Counterlife . . . " 322-3)

But the difficulty of searching for the truth does not mean the search should be abandoned; instead, the difficulty shows how important the search is. Bruce and Toby continue their research into the near and distant pasts, and these two apparently disparate searches eventually come together when Toby reveals that he believes the Templars were gnostics. Thus Piers has returned in the twentieth century to a religion that his ancestors had obstructed. And he dies an untimely death because of his gnosticism.

At this point in the novel Bruce's narrative is nearing its end. Bruce includes some passages from Toby's book and reports some conversations that he and Toby have. He then includes a long section from Sutcliffe's notebooks. These notes are similar in style to Pursewarden's: they tend to be fragmented snatches of thought, sometimes written in rhyme, and seldom containing a complete story. In one of the longer passages, Sutcliffe writes about the power of writing experienced by his wife Pia. Just as Bruce is writing to heal himself, so has Pia. Sutcliffe says:

> And Pia, after sorting out [Trash's] effects and writing to her brother, wrote me a full account of everything in a tremulous but meticulous hand. It was not for my sake she did this, nor because she wished to plant darts in me, no. It was as if to make herself realise fully the fact of Trash's death, to let it impact on her, pierce the numbness. (260)

Pia, like Bruce, is writing to feel, in a sense, to be real. The words she sends Sutcliffe help her to relive and deal with the events in her life.

The relentless textualizing of life in the Quintet is a sign of its postmodernism. Linda Hutcheon says that John Fowles's The French Lieutenant's Woman "is explicitly and self-consciously auto-referential. Its thematization of the role of the reader and of the ontological status of the text works both to create and to break down artifice" (71). The Quintet is similar to Fowles's novel in precisely this way, but the Quintet complicates and extends its auto-referentiality by being not one, but five novels.

In the final chapter, which follows the passages from Sutcliffe's notebooks, Bruce has dropped out of the narrative entirely, and we realize that he is not the narrator but a character in a novel by Blanford. With the introduction of Blanford, the reader must begin to juggle two levels of reality and must recognize that two levels are being presented. As William Godshalk points out:

> . . . I would like to recall Langer's concept of virtual reality, and suggest that Durrell relies on our regarding the characters in his fictive reality--such characters as Blanford and Tu--as virtually real. If we fail to do this--and I believe that most readers would do this without thinking--we miss Durrell's vital distinction between the fictively real Blanford and the fictively fictional Sutcliffe. And we miss a good deal of the play between reality and fiction in his novels. ~~In~~ Durrell's fictive reality ~~he~~ is holding a mirror up to our experienced reality, and to experience the novels properly we must be able to--at some level--enter the fictional reality that Durrell creates. ("Commentary" 109)

In _Monsieur_ the distinction between the fictively real and the fictively fictional is a useful one. If we take Sutcliffe's fictional character, Bloshford, we can see how the various layers of reality can proliferate. Bloshford is fictively meta-fictional, being the creation of the already fictively fictional Sutcliffe, himself the creation of the fictively real Blanford. An example of the game that Durrell is playing is the beginning of the book that Sutcliffe plans, the book featuring a hero called Oakshot. This novel starts with the same two sentences that begin _Monsieur_. The only difference is that in Sutcliffe's fiction the pronoun is "he" (187); in Bruce's journal, the pronoun is "we" (7). The different pronouns signify the different ways the protagonists are viewed: Oakshot is seen in normal singular terms by his creator while Bruce's choice of the plural first person pronoun emphasises his exploration of his past and present selves.

The opening paragraph of Chapter Five makes it clear that all the preceding chapters are part of a novel written by Blanford and that Bruce, Toby, Sutcliffe, Piers, Sylvie, Pia, Trash, and all the minor characters are his inventions. But Blanford is not the narrator of Chapter Five: he is referred to as "he." Evidently there is another narrator writing this part of the novel, and Blanford even makes a suggestion about the identity of this person: "It is still a moot point whether Socrates, in fact, existed as anything more than a character in a novel by Plato. And what of me, he thought? Am I possibly an invention of someone like old D--the devil at large?" (281). "Old D" is certainly Durrell himself.

In addition to pondering his own nascence, Blanford discusses the birth of his novel and makes it clear that he believes he is doing something different with narrative form:

> Blanford the novelist sighed as he separated the master copy of the typescript from the other two, and taking up a blank white sheet rapidly wrote down several provisional titles for this new and rather undisciplined departure from the ordinary product. After several faltering attempts he decided to give the devil his due, so to speak, and to call it *Le Monsieur*. . . . There were so many corners he had left unexplored, so many potentialities undeveloped because he had firmly decided not to write "the ordinary sort of novel". (275)

The sense of play that William Godshalk says is an integral part of Durrell's fiction is clearly evident with the introduction of Blanford. For example, Blanford contemplates his fictional creation and writes: "That blasted Sutcliffe--he had grown fond of him; he had enjoyed even being pilloried by him under the disgusting name of Bloshford. Perhaps he should sue himself for libel" (275). Blanford has his joke, but he also makes it clear that writing fiction is a way for him to deal with his life: "Soon he would have done with the book, done with the masks under which he had so successfully disguised his weaknesses and disappointments and adventures" (276). Blanford has turned his life into fiction as a way of understanding it.

As with all of Durrell's writers, Blanford offers his thoughts on the process of writing and its relation to reality. He mentions having used his wife, Livia, to create Sabine, Pia, and Sylvie. He also reveals that he has the same difficulty that Sutcliffe has:

> By a singular paradox (perhaps inherent in all writing?) the passages that he knew would be regarded as over-theatrical or unreal ("people don't behave like that") would be the truth, and the rest which rang somehow true, the purest fabrication. He wondered if in the next book he could cut down a layer or two to reveal the invisible larval forms, the root forms which had given him these projections? (282)

The passage also hints at the key to understanding the next novel in the Quintet.

Although Blanford is presented as the voice of authority in the last chapter of Monsieur--the narrative, while third person, is filtered through him until the last paragraph--his authority is challenged by the last paragraph in which it appears that he is mentally unbalanced. He has been sitting in a restaurant talking to Constance (the Duchess of Tu), but Constance is dead.

> It was late when Blanford paid the bill and said goodnight to the Duchess; wearily the waiters hovered around him. They had come to respect this distinguished elderly Englishman who came so often to spend the whole evening talking in whispers to an empty alcove--for it was some time since the name of the Duchess had appeared on the death-map of the stars. (295)

With this information the reader is thrown into confusion, wondering who is telling the story and what is real. These are precisely the questions that I think Durrell wants the reader to be faced with, and in the subsequent novels of the Quintet he purposely intensifies the confusion in order to force the reader to question what constitutes reality--fictional or otherwise.

Part Two: New Planes of Reality

Livia continues and intensifies, to a degree, the self-conscious aspects of the narrative in *Monsieur*. Like the fifth chapter of *Monsieur*, *Livia* has a third person narrator who is not Blanford, but Blanford is the major character. Through Blanford and his thoughts on writing, the relation between fiction and reality is explored more deeply in *Livia* than in *Monsieur*. The recreation of the past through memory is also an integral part of *Livia*, thereby continuing the interest in this topic that Durrell has developed throughout his novels.

In Chapter One Blanford receives news of Constance's death; thus Livia is set in the past compared to the last chapter of Monsieur. The novel begins:

> When the news of Tu's death reached Blanford he was actually living in her house in Sussex, watching the first winter snow fall out of a dark sky, amidst darker woods, which had long since engulfed an ochre sunset. "Actually", because his own version of the event will be slightly different, both for the sake of posterity and also on stylistic grounds. (1)

The second sentence of the novel shows the prevailing interest in artistic creation, especially the discrepancy between what actually happens and how it will be modified and presented in a fiction.

The beginning of Livia reiterates the fact that Sutcliffe is a character in a novel by Blanford. While thinking of Tu, Blanford remarks on what she will miss: "all the new material he had added to his book--a novel about another novelist named Sutcliffe, who had become almost as real to him and to Tu as he, Blanford, was to himself" (1). It is likely that Blanford is referring to Monsieur, and this becomes clear when Blanford remarks a couple of pages later, "So the Sutcliffe he invented for his novel Monsieur shot himself through the mirror in the earlier version? 'I had to,' he explained, pointing to Blanford. 'It was him or me'" (3). The nature of reality and fictional reality starts to become fluid when we realize that Blanford is changing or editing some of the actions he put into Monsieur. The line between various levels of fictionality becomes blurred as Sutcliffe moves from one level of fictional reality to another. His individuality and freedom become more pronounced in this novel.

Thinking of characters as being alive even though they are only alive in books is one way that Durrell explores the apparent difference between fiction and reality. Blanford believes that Tu is still somehow alive because he realizes that he is surrounded by her books, which are filled with her annotations. The fragments of her writing become a substitute for her physical presence. "He suddenly realised that he was surrounded by the dead woman's books. Underlinings, annotations. She was still here!" (1). From believing that Tu is alive because she is present in her books, Blanford makes a leap to believing that Sutcliffe is alive because he exists in Blanford's book. Blanford wonders about how Sutcliffe will react to the news of Tu's death. Of course, he is imagining how he will present the material in a fictional sense: "Should he make him whimper in the novel like some ghastly dog?" (2). Although Sutcliffe is his creation, Blanford manages to think of him as being part of him and yet independent at the same time. "He wondered where in his imagination, which was his real life, Sutcliffe might be--he would have liked to talk to him" (4). The desire to talk to Sutcliffe shows that Blanford thinks of him as a separate person, one capable of thinking his own thoughts and developing a conversation. Sutcliffe is not simply a figment of Blanford's imagination, or to give credit to Blanford's point that his imagination is his real life, Sutcliffe is entirely a figment of Blanford's imagination, and that is what makes him real.

The line between the planes of fictionality blurs when Blanford seems to hear the phone ring again, and he imagines that the caller is Sutcliffe: "he knew at once who it was--it could only be his invention Sutcliffe" (6). Blanford's fictional creation immediately starts to complain that Blanford should not have killed him off in _Monsieur_ and that he should be brought back, an action that appears already to have taken place. Blanford counters with his own accusation about Sutcliffe's unfinished work called _Tu Quoque_.

The two banter, talking about writing and their respective futures as writers. Sutcliffe tells Blanford, "'I really think it is your turn to write [a book]--and this time the true story of your love, our love, for Constance and indeed for Livia despite what she did to you, to us, to me'" (7). The possibility of Sutcliffe's being Blanford's alter-ego is raised with this comment, and it is reinforced with the following one: "After a pause during which both writers thought furiously about the book which Blanford called _Monsieur_ and Sutcliffe _The_

Prince of Darkness, their faltering conversation was resumed" (8). The conversation leads to a statement that provides a key for understanding the Quintet, which Durrell calls a quincunx. Blanford says:

> "Well, squinting round the curves of futurity I saw something like a quincunx of novels set out in a good classical order. Five Q novels written in a highly elliptical quincunxial style invented for the occasion. Though only dependent on one another as echoes might be, they would not be laid end to end in serial order, like dominoes--but simply belong to the same blood group, five panels for which your creaky old *Monsieur* would provide simply a cluster of themes to be reworked in the others." (11)

With these words, Blanford reveals the structure of the Quintet and the relationship of the individual novels. The OED defines "quincunx" as "five objects set so that four are at corners of square or rectangle and the other at its centre." Thus *Monsieur* is at the centre of the figure, and the other four novels are at the corners of the square. They are tangentially related to one another, but it is possible to appreciate one without having read all five. It is not possible, though, without having read them all, to understand fully the particular thematic and formal purpose of each and how each affects the others.

In addition to giving a clue about the overall structure of the Quintet, this passage also shows how much a part of Blanford Sutcliffe is. Blanford calls *Monsieur* Sutcliffe's book, but we have already been told that

Sutcliffe called the book *The Prince of Darkness*. At this point it is still possible to imagine that Blanford is talking to himself, carrying on a conversation with his alter-ego named Sutcliffe. Making his alter-ego another writer means that he can have discussions about creativity. He can bounce ideas off Sutcliffe, and he can pretend that any dissension comes from him. For example, after Blanford describes the set of books as being "'roped together like climbers on a rockface, but . . . independent. The relation of the caterpillar to the butterfly, the tadpole to the frog. An organic relation'" (11), Sutcliffe complains, "'The old danger is there--a work weighed down with theoretical considerations'" (11). Durrell is being quite playful here: the criticism raised by Sutcliffe about Blanford's projected set of novels is similar to the objection raised by some critics to Durrell's Quartet. Durrell's rich inter-textuality can be seen in a number of other ways; for example, the name of Sutcliffe's novel *Tu Quoque* is similar to Durrell's *Tunc* and *Nunquam* and Blanford says that Livia used him as a "*machine à plaisir*" (14), a clear echo of *The Revolt of Aphrodite*. Durrell's playfulness is seen in his inter-textual references and allusions, which are often generated in conversations between Blanford and his fictional creation. The playfulness is also seen in the fact that Sutcliffe often berates his creator and vice versa.

The conversation about writing eventually gets to the suggestion that Blanford and Sutcliffe should collaborate on a novel in order to prevent Blanford from losing his mind. Blanford says to Sutcliffe, "'Soon there will be nobody to talk to except you. It is extremely sad--what shall I do for company? You bore me so! It will probably lead to madness" (15), and Sutcliffe counters with, "We will write a book" (15). He goes on to describe the endeavour, and already he is thinking in terms of more than one book. "'The relationship between our books will be incestuous, then, I take it? They will be encysted in each other, not complementary. There would be room for everything, poem, autobiography, short story, and so on'" (17). Thus the narrative form of the novels is sorted out, and the theme has already been determined. The writers will deal with their feelings for the women in their lives: Constance, Livia, and Pia, specifically; and in general terms the novels will treat of "'the perennity of despair, intractibility of language, impenetrability of art, insipidity of human love'" (15). Thus, what Blanford has experienced in life is worked through in his creation of Sutcliffe and the similar problems the fictional character has to face.

By having two writers, one the creation of the other, and both the creation of the author, Durrell gains another dimension of interplay between the reader and the narrative. As the primary writer, Blanford is in a position to give advice to Sutcliffe. The reader must remember that this is really advice to himself, at least at this point in the narrative. As Blanford says to Sutcliffe:

> "I had realised something concrete, namely that small art creates a throb, big art a wholesome vertigo. I tried to teach you this in your dealings with the people around you, so that your writing might have pith and irony. But since human consciousness distorts in the act of observing, you and I, seen by a third person, are perverted images of one another. We exchange highly diversified memoranda about the state of our attachment, just like real lovers entering that state which probably never existed." (25)

The reader does see these two characters as images of each other, but Durrell quickly complicates this perception by having Blanford be able to hear "the bearish sounds of Toby clearing his throat and the voice of a girl" (25). Toby and the girl are guests at Sutcliffe's flat in Oxford, but they are all imaginary. It is much more difficult to keep on thinking of Sutcliffe as Blanford's alter-ego when he appears to be conducting a discrete life.

And yet little is discrete in this fictional world because of the perceived lack of separate, stable egos, again an echo of previous works. Blanford says:

> "What always bothered me was the question of a stable ego--did such a thing exist? The old notion of such an animal was rather primitive, particularly for novelists with an itch to explain this action or that. Myself I could hardly write down the name of a

> character without suddenly being swamped by an ocean of possible attributes, each as valid and truthful as any other. The human psyche is almost infinitely various--so various that it can afford to be contradictory even as regards itself. How poor is the pathetic little typology of our modern psychology--why, even astrology, however suspect as a science, makes some attempt to encompass the vast multiplicity of purely human attributes. That is why our novels, yours and mine, Robin, are also poor." (37)

This lack of a stable ego is being illustrated while Blanford talks about it by the relationship between him and his fictional creation. There isn't even any stability in the relationship of ego and alter-ego. Personality is constantly shifting, and yet the appearance of a stable personality or ego is necessary in order to create a character. Blanford ponders this problem in the light of a set of novels: "'Would it be possible, I wondered, to deal fairly with a multiplicity of attributes and still preserve a semblance of figurative unity in the personage described? I was dreaming of a book which, though multiple, embodied an organic unity'" (38). The fragmented ego, like a fragmented narrative, must be brought together. Unity is the ultimate goal: unity of form and content.

According to Blanford, unity can be achieved after one recognizes the nature of time. Blanford and Sutcliffe have the following conversation in which Blanford castigates Sutcliffe for his lack of imagination. Blanford starts:

> "I think the trouble is that you are thinking one-dimensionally all the time, like an old-fashioned novelist. You do not seem to be able to envisage a series of books through which the characters move for all the world as if to illustrate the notion of reincarnation. After all, men and women are polyphonic beings. They know they had previous lives, but they are not sure what they were; all they feel is the weight of their karma, the poetry of previous existences registered in the penumbra of past time."
>
> "How sick I am of the time notions."
>
> "So am I, but the obsession is the age's. We have at any rate come to terms with it, we know that calendar time is a convenience and not a truth. Time is all one sheet--and just as the germs of an illness, say tuberculosis, are there inside one, ready and waiting to be called out by circumstance, so from a temporal point of view are the maggots already in the flesh waiting patiently for the temporal circumstance of death to set them free. Pia into Livia, Livia into Pia, what does it matter?--somewhere in that recess of time they are conscious of each other, of their origins." (41-2)

Blanford then goes into the "recess of time" and starts to describe the past to Sutcliffe. He goes on for some time until he realizes that the telephone is dead. Again the reader is faced with the possibility that Blanford is senile or mad and that the narrative is showing the deterioration of his mind and his weakening grasp of reality. This idea is supported by a letter that Blanford finds, a letter from him to Constance about a year earlier. In it he writes that Cade, his valet, had read his tarot cards and determined that he would commit suicide within a year. Blanford appears to believe this prophecy; he imagines that Sutcliffe will have to finish his books. He writes in the letter:

> "I must add in all honesty that Sutcliffe is somewhat scared of the idea. When I outlined it he said: 'But Aubrey, this could lead anywhere.' I said: 'Of course. I have freed us both.' The notion of an absolute freedom in the non-deterministic sense alarmed him. As usual he became flippant, to give himself time to reflect. Then he said, 'What would you give me if I wrote a book to prove that the great Blanford is simply the fiction of one of his fictions? Eh?' You know the answer as well as I do, but I could not resist saying it out loud. 'The top prize, Robin Sutcliffe, immortality in the here and now.'" (53)

Absolute freedom in narrative is demonstrated in the novel and in the remaining novels of the Quintet. Sutcliffe gains more autonomy, and Blanford begins to see him as a collaborator in addition to being his fictional character.

The absolute freedom that Blanford speaks of is also demonstrated by how the other characters interact. For example, in Chapter Two when Blanford is reminiscing about the long ago days in Provence, he describes three portraits in the De Nogaret chateau:

> three smoky heads printed in the typical ancestor-style of safe academicians of the last century. And now almost obliterated by corruptions in the pigment. The names too were hardly readable, though one could make out the word Piers on the portrait of the pale young man with a frail and consumptive expression, and the word Sylvie below that of the dark intense girl, who might well have been his

> sister. The third picture had fared worse and it was literally not possible to tell whether the subject was a man or a woman--only that its colouring was blonde and not dark, its eyes as blue and lucid as Hilary's. (64)

The portraits may simply have provided Blanford with the names for his characters in *Monsieur*, but they can also be seen as cutting across two layers or planes of reality. The lack of identification of the gender of the person in the third portrait ties together the two triangles of the two layers of reality. Blanford replaces his friend Hilary in a peculiar triangle formed initially by Hilary, Constance, and Livia; and in his novel *Monsieur*, Blanford tranforms his real-life triangle into one formed by Piers, his sister, Sylvie, and her husband, Bruce. Even in this distant past, Blanford has begun to think about how to write about these triangles although at the time he doesn't think it is possible: "'If only I believed in the novel as a *device* I would incorporate their story in a book which had nothing to do with real life'" (65). Blanford's life as a writer can be seen as being directed toward this purpose. He does learn how to write the story of the three and put it into a novel unconnected to real life.

The layers of reality continue to proliferate and blur. For example, in Chapter Three we learn about Felix Chatto. His mother had an attendant named Wade, who was "far closer to her than either her son or her lover" (75). Although the situations are not identical, Blanford's valet, or attendant, is named Cade, and he ends up being the closest person to Blanford. Both Blanford and Felix's mother require a great deal of physical care, and both attendants have rather repulsive personalities. Blanford and Felix Chatto are on the same plane of reality, but the similarity in the names of the attendants and their personalities in too great to be mere coincidence. Once again, Durrell is playing with and manipulating the narrative.

In Chapter Four, the reason for the birth of Sutcliffe is revealed. When he is a child, Blanford is humiliated by a fellow schoolboy who reads his commonplace book. In self-defence, Blanford invents Sutcliffe to disguise the fact that he is writing.

> But slowly and insidiously S began to take shape as a person, a flippant and desperate person, a splintered man, destined for authorship with all its woes and splendours. . . . [O]ver the years he was fleshed out by quotations which suggested the soliloquies of a lonely and hunted intellectual, a marginal man; Blanford took refuge in him, so to speak, from a world which seemed to him quite insensitive to intellectual matters, in fact calamitously philistine. (115)

The creation of the alter-ego protects Blanford, and it also serves to develop his own writing. The comment that Sutcliffe is a "marginal" man has two meanings: Sutcliffe does not live in the mainstream of society, and he exists only in the margins or edges of Blanford's books. His existence is circumscribed by the pages of Blanford's work.

The image of the quincunx is used in Chapter Five, and it unites the narrative form of the novels and the sub-plot of Lord Galen and the Templar treasure he is looking for in Avignon. Quatrefages' research into the lost treasure indicates that it is hidden in a place marked by a quincunx of trees. But Quatrefages believes the treasure has more to do with a method than with a product. Blanford catches on and sees that Quatrefages believes the real treasure is a key to production, a kind of knowledge, and a way of manipulating reality. In short Blanford suggests that the real treasure is "the Philosopher's Stone" (163), which in alchemy is capable of transforming base metals into gold and prolonging life.

Thus, at the centre of the quincunx the treasure in both the sub-plot and the narrative form is knowledge that leads to a change in reality. Monsieur and the rest of the Quintet force the reader to consider and incorporate different layers or planes of reality. Just as the non-existent Philosopher's Stone is incapable of changing matter, so is a fictively real character incapable of having a relationship with a fictively fictional one. But by including the possibility of the first and the actuality of the second, Durrell compels the reader to question the nature of reality itself.

Reality is called into question increasingly towards the end of Livia, an appropriate development when one notes that the second world war begins at the end of the novel. The actual world is on the threshold of a violent upheaval, just as the world of fiction is experiencing a metamorphosis. In the sixth chapter the connection between reality and fictional reality is puzzled over by the two writers, once again on the phone:

> "Hullo!" cried Sutcliffe twice, on a note of almost childish anxiety. (Ghosts always get alarmed when they are not in full manifestation--when they are off duty, so to speak--for it seems to them that they are in danger of ceasing to exist.) Yes. Suppose, I mean, that Blanford forgot to think of *him*! What then? It would be the end! And Blanford himself was, at that moment, bowed under the same thought, for he knew that once the ghosts, which together go to make up the collective memory, cease to care . . . why, one goes out like a light. Ask any artist! (167)

Once again the narrative reflects the theory that is being proposed in it. Blanford becomes lost in his thoughts about the war, not Sutcliffe, and so Sutcliffe drops out of the novel until Blanford remembers him and gives him permission to exist as a writer: "'Even the [sex] act is dying', he allowed Sutcliffe to note, 'and will soon become as charmless as badminton'" (174). Although Blanford has given Sutcliffe some licence, Blanford is still in control, and the two are still very much connected. For example, when drunk--itself a state that alters reality--Blanford imagines himself

> seated at the stained old table in the garden covering page after page of his

> notebooks in a hand which he vaguely recognised as that of Sutcliffe. Time stretched away on either side of the point-event of each drawn breath, back into the subfusc suburban past, forwards into a veiled future, but somehow as yet void of significance. The writer, _l'homme en marge_, writing the Memoirs of the Marginal Man. On the title-page he had written, in this large and flamboyant hand: "All serial reality is by this writing called into question." (195)

Blanford and Sutcliffe are two sides of the same person: Blanford initially invents Sutcliffe as a cover, but then the fictional creation becomes an avenue of thought, thus solidifying its position in Blanford's life.

The separation of the two characters is the main example of Durrell's working out of the theories that they have offered in the narrative. "Serial reality" is questioned in the writing because of the treatment of time: Blanford goes back and forth in time remembering selectively and creating the past selectively both in his initial thoughts and how he forms those thoughts into fiction. Once time has become disrupted, the various planes of reality--the fictively real and the fictively fictional--can begin to intersect and generate new planes.

Thus we can see a shift in emphasis from the Quartet to the Quintet, which is made clear in _Livia_. No longer is reality itself in a state of flux, but also reality, fiction, and the combination of the two are in a state of flux.

Part Three: Sutcliffe Comes Alive

In _Constance: or Solitary Practices_ a curious development occurs: Sutcliffe becomes a character separate from Blanford. Sutcliffe steps out of the fictively fictional plane of reality he was first introduced to and enters the plane of the fictively real. He becomes endowed with the same level of reality that the characters such as Blanford, Affad, and Constance have. The control that Blanford has over his creation slips, necessitating an adjustment on the part of the reader and Blanford.

Near the beginning of the novel Blanford tells Hilary that he has had to stop Sutcliffe, his character, because he has become too real. In explaining why he destroyed a considerable quantity of manuscripts, Blanford says: "'I invented a man I called Sutcliffe--for lack of anything better--and he became altogether too real. He started following me about like gravity, as well as riding on my back like the Old Man of the Sea'" (19). But Blanford's power to control or eliminate his fictional creation is immediately undercut by an action that brings together the two planes of reality. Freud's sofa is sent to Tu Duc by Pia, Sutcliffe's wife. This event causes some consternation.

> Constance gazed at Aubrey with narrowed eyes and said accusingly, "I thought you told me Sutcliffe was invented." She held the end of the invoice which contained the name of the sender. "We will see about that later," said Blanford evasively. (19)

The novel can no longer be read as if the action were realistic: the merging of the two disparate levels of reality make that impossible.

In his notes, which he is destroying, Blanford asks the question, "'If real people could cohabit with the creatures of their imagination--say, in a novel--then what sort of children would be the fruit of their union: changelings?'" (25). As usual Durrell provides broad hints as to the narrative point of view. In _Constance_ real people do cohabit with imaginary ones: Sutcliffe becomes a character, and the fruit of his union with Blanford is another novel that is a kind of changeling.

Constance contains other suggestions of the mixing of realities. For example , while on the journey up the Nile, Blanford, Sam, and Affad travel with a French couple who are reminiscent of Piers and Sylvie de Nogaret: "'_les ogres_'" they were christened, for their family name was LeNogre. They were brother and sister, twins to the hour, inseparable--Bruno and Sylvaine by name" (77). Blanford's notebook records the thought that Sylvaine "reminded [him] most acutely of someone" (78). The brother and sister live in Villefoin, a name similar to Verfeuille, where Piers and Sylvie live. Like the portraits hanging at Tu Duc, the LeNogres are sparks for Blanford's imagination, providing a reality which is used for a fiction. Bruno is a model for both Piers and Toby as he wants "to write a book about the Templars--apparently there was a mass of unpublished matter in the muniments room of the chateau" (85). In

Constance we can see the literary process in action. The various threads of Blanford's are arranged and modified to create the fiction. In this way, Piers and Sylvie can be seen as being modelled on Bruno and Sylvaine in addition to Hilary, Constance, and Livia. Sylvie's madness, for example, is a part of Sylvaine. When Blanford thinks he remembers where he saw her--at the insane asylum of Montfavet--Sylvaine says, "'Not me . . . or me in another life--who can say?'" (86). The other life becomes the fictional one. Another example of this process is the use of Major Drexel, a doctor whom Sam and Blanford meet when they are on their trip with Affad, as a model for Bruce Drexel in Monsieur. And clearly, Affad is the model for Akkad.

But the imaginary characters do not stay imaginary as we have seen with Sutcliffe. And Blanford is not the only one to perceive the fictional characters as real. After Blanford is wounded in Egypt, he receives a letter from Constance, who in her capacity as a psychoanalyst, is treating Pia, Sutcliffe's wife. Constance has met Sutcliffe and writes, "We are friends now, close friends. He is a weird man" (94), even though when they first talk she cannot believe that he is real. He counters with "'Everybody is real'" (116). To Sutcliffe, of course, everybody is real: he is the fiction.

But existing in a fiction confers its own kind of being. Constance echoes Blanford's idea: "'It must be strange to exist only in someone's diary, like Socrates--we only have Plato's word for his existence'" (122). But like Socrates, Sutcliffe does appear to have his own life--he seems like a real person. In addition to existing in a fiction, a person or character can exist by creating a fiction and can heal himself. Freud tells Sutcliffe that he "must sublimate the distress in a book" (122), a task Sutcliffe says he has been trying to do even before he felt the distress. And he also thinks that it will only be completed when he dies. Thus the book is always in process, always incorporating bits of life. As Sutcliffe thinks:

> "After all, why not a book full of spare parts of other books, of characters left over from other lives, all circulating in each other's bloodstreams--yet all fresh, nothing second-hand, twice-chewed, twice-breathed. Such a book might ask you if life is worth breathing . . . . To commingle and intersperse contingent realities--that's the game! After all, how few are the options open to us--few varieties of human shape, mental dispositions, scales of behaviour: hardly more numerous than the available Christian names used by the race. How many coats of reality does it take to get a nice clean surface to the apprehension? We are all fragments of one another; everyone has a little bit of everything in his makeup. . . . Yet obstinately I dream of such a book, full of not completely discrete characters, of ancestors and descendants all mixed up--could such people walk in and out of each other's lives without damaging the quiddity of each other? . . . I must talk to Aubrey about it. (123)

It is sometime during the war when Sutcliffe has these thoughts about writing, but the conversation about writing at the beginning of Livia takes place many years later when Blanford is an old man. It is interesting that Sutcliffe is always perceived as a writer. Even when he is doing different jobs, writing is his vocation. Aubrey Blanford is much less open about his desire, and thus it is fitting that the writing side of him comes out in Sutcliffe.

The concern with twisting reality to force a new way of looking at life is of great importance to Sutcliffe not only in his creative love but also his domestic life. He criticises Schwarz's treatment of Pia because it does not allow for a new perception, and he does so in literary terms:

> "Any poet will tell you that the basic illness is the ego, which, when it swells, engenders stress, dislocating reality. Then the unbeknownst steps in with its gnomes and Dopplegangers; but once you realise this simple fact your positivism falls from you like a cloak. . . . what comes out now is poetry--that highly aberrant act of nature! It lies the other side of a crisis of identity, stresspoint, flashpoint, turnstile. Once in these calm waters one reads new meaning into things." (133)

Clearly, for Sutcliffe literature involves providing the opportunity to see in a new way. The writer gets to the point of creativity by struggling with the ego, by facing problems of self-identity. Through the struggle and suffering the creative urge is born.

According to Sutcliffe, the difficulty with Pia's analysis is its focus. The analysis is a process of going into the unconscious and the past rather than the future. The other major problem for Sutcliffe is that Freudian analysis is based on sexuality. He notes, "Now, after such a long period of misadventure, he realised in what sense Western Man had got his priorities wrong; the target was not between the thighs, but between the eyes--the pineal gland of the white vision" (136). Knowledge is the goal, and it comes about through an ability to see life in all its peculiarities. Sutcliffe is interested in writing a novel that will reflect this twisting and manipulation of reality. As Sutcliffe is Blanford's creation, we can assume that Blanford also has these ideas.

For most of Constance Sutcliffe is given free rein by Blanford, but near the end when Blanford comes to Geneva and Sutcliffe fails to meet him, Blanford is annoyed. He talks of Sutcliffe as if he has free will, and then he says he will punish him for exercising it. He asks Constance to pass on a message to Sutcliffe that

> "he will be punished by a woman of unexpected force and glory with whom he will be forced to couple. . . . I am annoyed because my power over him is not absolute--he is after all my creation; but he can sometimes break loose and show traces of free will. My domination is incomplete, damn him. I told him to come to the airport. He mutinied. He must be punished!" (331)

That Blanford retains some power over Sutcliffe is shown in the next chapter when Sutcliffe has sex with Trash, his wife's lover.

When Sutcliffe finally telephones Blanford to complain about being raped by Trash, Blanford is unsympathetic and points out, "'It is not possible; you are fictions'" (340). At this, Sutcliffe asks, "'Have we no future, then?'" (340), and the reply pushes him firmly back into fictional territory: "'You have contexts, but no future and no past'" (340). The two reach an understanding of their relative positions. Sutcliffe says, "'It's as if we were versions of one another set upon differing time-tracks. Reality is very fatiguing'" (341), and Blanford agrees. They reconcile their differences and make plans to meet so they can discuss their books--Monsieur and The Prince of Darkness. In Chapter Thirteen (an auspicious number) Sutcliffe materializes in Blanford's room, and they talk about their books and make plans to return to Avignon, the setting of their novels. Within the chapter is a possible explanation for why Blanford sees his fictional creation in the flesh: he is convalescing from being shot and is under the influence of drugs. "Here he must lie for months as yet, woozy from drugs, with reality dissolving like a tablet in spittle" (353). The reader is once again invited to read the novel realistically. Sutcliffe appears to be put back in his fictional place; at least the possibility exists that because of the drugs, Blanford is imagining that Sutcliffe is present.

But in the next novel of the Quintet, Sebastian: or Ruling Passions, Sutcliffe resumes his independent existence. However, he does so because Blanford allows it. Blanford tells Affad:

> I realise now that I came to Egypt because I was ill, I was afraid of the man on my back. I did a Sinbad in the hope of ridding myself of Sutcliffe--you will have noticed my various attempts to dispense with him, to make him commit suicide for example, using the bridge as a symbol. I had to have my spine shot into holes before I realised that the only way to deal with the Socratic Voice is to concretise it, let it live, manifest itself. Then it becomes a harmless ghost, it passes off in a fever, it writes the classic phrase for you. It can do everything but love. That you must do for yourself. (5)

These comments are similar to Sutcliffe's in Constance; again the mingling of realities operates on more than one level. The lives of Sutcliffe and his creator, Blanford, are inextricably bound together just as the lives of Socrates and Plato are bound. We know Socrates through Plato, and we know Sutcliffe through Blanford. By comparing Sutcliffe and Socrates, Blanford shows the creative power of narrative.

Sutcliffe continues his independent existence in regard to Constance, who borrows a book from him and who notices that in the margin he has written, "'The same people are also others without realising it'" (8). This comment can refer to Sutcliffe and Blanford, and it also has significance for Constance, who is falling in love with Affad and who feels a special connection with him. The discussion of reality and what constitutes an individual is broadened in Sebastian with its emphasis on psychoanalysis. Schwarz, Constance's teacher and mentor, thinks that reality "which was once so very 'real' now only manifested a 'tendency to exist'! All truth had become provisional and subject to scale. Truth was only true 'on the whole'" (9). This view is similar to the view of reality presented in the Quartet, but the complications of the merged fields of reality in the Quintet make a stronger case for this view than the twists of time and place in the Quartet do. The emphasis on psychoanalysis with its probing questions as to what constitutes a particular reality for an individual matches the formal narrative experimentation, which is doing the same thing.

Blanford and Sutcliffe have relatively minor roles in Sebastian; the focus is on Constance and Affad. But Blanford and Sutcliffe are treated as individuals. In an interesting twist, Constance has dinner with a doctor from Alexandria (who is likely Balthazar from the Quartet) who knows of Blanford through Sutcliffe. He tells Constance, "'I only know of [Blanford] through Sutcliffe himself--something about collaboration on a book which wasn't going too well; according to him each one was trying to drag the sheets over to his side of the bed, and the book was suffering from it'" (101). The image of the two writers fighting in bed is particularly apt as they are quarrelling over their offspring. Beds are places of conception for children, and both Sutcliffe and Blanford have no progeny but their books. Thus they argue vehemently about how their book should be.

Even Constance gets tired of hearing her friends talk about their work.

> It was curious, too, to hear them discussing the interminable sequences of the "double concerto" as Blanford called their novel now. He took the concerns of form very seriously and reacted with annoyance to Sutcliffe's jocose suggestions, namely that the whole thing would be much tidier as an exchange of letters. (123)

However, the quibbling over the book doesn't halt the production of it, and the the two writers appear to work independently of each other. Blanford points out: "'Your version of our book gives the presence of events, mine the absence . . . '" (143). Sutcliffe agrees and adds, "'[I]t's because you really exist. I'm just a figment, living by proxy, turned on and off at will like a memory. I'm only as real as is necessary. My existence is contingent. Our books are linked without being interlocked, if you see'" (144). The novels of the Quartet can be seen as being interlocked because it is clear how they fit together. But the novels of the Quintet are not as easily distinguished. Their narrative form is more confusing and more illogical if they are looked at in the same manner as the Quartet.

Towards the end of *Sebastian*, Sutcliffe tells Blanford that they will have to end their novels soon, and they will have to agree in order to do so: "'Soon we are going to have to collaborate on a terminal book, and it's important that we should see eye to eye, so that it will be written, like all good books, by the placental shadow, me!'" (182). Thus the offspring wants to become the parent or creator of the next text. He realises, though, that the key to the creation is knowledge--seeing eye to eye. Without understanding and unity, the writer or writers cannot create.

Quinx: or The Ripper's Tale is set in Avignon after the war, and it contains the merged realities of the previous novels of the Quintet. In addition to the fact that Sutcliffe continues to be a separate character existing on the same plane of reality as the fictively real characters, there is even more crossover between the planes of reality. Like *Monsieur*, *Quinx* begins with a train trip, but this time there is a group of friends on the train, and they are not travelling in response to a death. Instead, they are going to Provence to begin their new lives after the war. The new life includes all the living characters from the previous novels.

Chapter One of *Quinx* includes a variety of narrative devices, which are given in a fragmented and incoherent manner. This confusion mirrors the confusion and uncertainty of Blanford, who is not at all sure that he can cope with the peculiar turn of events. He refers to life as "provisional" (43) and decides to wait and see what happens. Again the two levels of reality are examined, along with the transposing of reality into fiction.

Quinx provides another twist to reality because of its inclusion of all the characters and Blanford's and Sutcliffe's self-conscious musings on writing. For example, Sutcliffe says to Blanford: "But surely we aren't going to let the ogres re-enact the terrible historic mistake which was the theme of your great epos--the heroic threesome of romance? Come, it didn't work in life any more than it worked in the novel, admit it!" (12). Therefore, according to Sutcliffe, it can't work in the changeling: the combination of a novel and life, which is *Quinx*.

Of course, in order for Sutcliffe to have this concern, it must be present already in Blanford. And we can see that this is the case. Blanford has already pondered the problem:

> Here they were to bury themselves in the three-cornered love which had once intrigued Blanford and caused him to try to forge a novel round the notion of this triune love. Alas, it had not come off. The idea, like the reality, had been too gnostic, and would, in the reality also, fail. (11)

Monsieur is the novel dealing with the triune love of Piers, Sylvie, and Bruce. The three middle novels of the Quintet include views of the reality that led to the fictional characters of the first novel. The basic triangular arrangement remains, but the individuals are different. And the final novel of the Quintet attempts an integration of the real and the fictional while creating a new reality and a new fiction. The triangle is metamorphosed yet again to include characters from both levels of reality and fictionality.

Quinx also has abrupt shifts in time. For example, most of the action takes place immediately after the war, but in the fragments there is a hint of the future:

> Listen, nothing that SUT has to say about BLAN should be taken too seriously, for he is only a creation of the latter, his Tu Quoque, existing by proxy. Is BLAN then King? Yes, in a way, but his powers are somewhat diminished, he can't see very far, whereas SUT is the third eye, so to speak. His belly-button pierces the future, the all-seeing eye of time. Is this what has poisoned the life of the solitary author as he files his nails and watches the snow falling eternally over Blandshire? Why the devil had he chosen a profession which involved him in the manufacture of these paper artifacts--characters which drained him of so much life that he often felt quite one-dimensional, himself equally a fiction of his fictions? Eh? After the publication of SUT's autobiography, in which he figured, fame was not long in coming, though both men had begun to feel wholly posthumous. But SUT became slowly so popular that he became detached like a retina, or else loosed like a soap-bubble to float about in the public consciousness like a sort of myth. He had made the English language, had the old Ripper, while Blanford had hardly made Who's Who. (27-8)

Blanford's mention of Sutcliffe's autobiography, which

Blanford had to have written, sounds like a take-off on Gertrude Stein's The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, written by Stein and all about her. Durrell had read Stein: in a 1936 letter to Henry Miller (who admired Stein's Narration), Durrell says her tone of voice is "like a multiplication table" (A Private Correspondence 28). Although Stein's and Durrell's styles are completely different, they do share a similar view of time and the importance of the present moment. And clearly, they share a similar sense of play in regard to narrative stance. But Durrell's Quintet is indicative of late twentieth century narrative, not early, because of the proliferation of planes of reality and fictionality. For example, the reference to Sutcliffe as the "Ripper" indicates that Blanford and Sutcliffe are continuing their "double concerto" and that Quinx is the latest offering.

In addition to continuing their writing, Blanford and Sutcliffe also continue their discussion of what a novel should be, while at the same time illustrating in their novel the aesthetic they have determined. Both writers start to drink heavily because of their fear of their new way of life that includes all the characters. But the alcohol has at least one positive effect.

> Paradoxically enough, however, the alcohol had an enlivening effect on his talent and the commonplace book began to fill up once more with what Sutcliffe called "thimbles" or stray thoughts, and Blanford "threads". He wrote: "Pearls can exist without a

> thread but the novel is an artefact and needs a thread upon which to thread not so much the pearls as the reader!" (50)

By this point in the Quintet, it is safe to say that the reader is being strung along as are pearls on a thread.

The alcohol's positive effect of encouraging the writers to write is manifested in two ways: Sutcliffe starts to tell stories, and Blanford starts to criticise his form.

> "It is out of date. The new discrete image of fiction is different. All the people are parts of larger people or composed of parts of smaller people, enlarged or diminished according to need. All events are the same event from a different angle. The world becomes a palimpsest with a laying out of superposed profiles." (51)

Once again the two sides of the writer can be seen: the creator and the critic.

In the third chapter of Quinx Sabine reappears, much to the delight of both writers. As Sutcliffe says, "'We've been hunting for you in each other's books for ages'" (72). Sutcliffe and Sabine, two fictional characters who have crossed the boundary of fictionality, rail against their very creation. "Why were they not free to forge their own futures? What damnable luck to be simply fragments of the capricious human mind!" (83). They know they are not real, but making physical love confers on them a kind of reality. Sabine says, "'How good it is, how real it is!'" (83). They can even feel compassion for Blanford, "their poor creator" (83), because he is alone.

So although they exist only because of him and resent their lack of freedom, they can see that they are better off than he is because they are together, even though they are fictions.

The meeting of form and content can also be seen when Blanford contemplates his style and compares it to

> "jump-cutting as with cinema film. The basic illustration is of course the admission that reincarnation is a fact. The old stable outlines of the dear old linear novel have been sidestepped in favour of the soft focus palimpsest which enables the actors to turn into each other, to melt into each other's lifespace if they wish. Everything and everyone comes closer and closer together, moving towards the one." (99)

Blanford is illustrating reincarnation in fiction; he is also showing actors or characters melting into each other. The best example is that of him and Sutcliffe.

The purpose for the particular form is Durrell's usual: the search for knowledge. As Blanford points out, "'. . . I was hoping not only to tell the truth but also to free the novel a bit from the shackles of a causality with a narrative apparently dislocated yet informed by mutually contradictory insights . . .'" (165). Because of the relativity of reality, which is demonstrated in the Quartet, causality is also called into question. The Quintet explores this particular aspect of reality more fully than the Quartet does. Thus it is quite appropriate that the Quintet includes two main characters who are writers and who are sides of the same person. In the unfolding of the various plots of the Quintet--the love relationships, the death pacts, the psychoanalysis, the war, the Templar treasure, and the problems of writers--we are constantly reminded of the shifts in reality caused by the changed perspective of the viewer. And to complicate and heighten the reality, the narrative also presents us with the arbitrariness of personality and literary creations. We can never be sure that we know a character because on the next page, he may be revealed in a new way, or he may even be revealed to be simply part of a story.

But what one knows in the factual sense is seen as determining one's life. Quatrefages, for example, is tortured because the Germans believe he knows where the Templar treasure is. But he doesn't. Quatrefages creates the fiction that he knows so that Lord Galen will keep him on the payroll. The fiction becomes his life, and the fiction nearly causes him to lose his life.

The Templar treasure, which is supposed to be at the centre of a quincunx, is compared to the knowledge gained through fiction. But both are left undetermined: the key is a way of seeing, not a definitive statement. The last action in the last novel of the Quintet is the entry of a procession into the cave to find the treasure. The end of the Quintet like the end of the Quartet is really a beginning. There is no sense of closure, only a vast number of unanswered questions about what happens and how the two planes of reality can interact. Blanford is not at the opening of the caves because he and Constance are off alone enjoying their new-found love, but he has the final words of the novel. "The lovers gave a shiver of premonition and Blanford thought that if ever he wrote the scene he would say: 'It was at this precise moment that reality prime rushed to the aid of fiction and the totally unpredictable began to take place!'" (201). As the unpredictable has already taken place--the meeting of fictively real and fictively fictional characters--we must assume that Blanford and Sutcliffe's Quinx was written before their Monsieur. Thus in Quinx Durrell reiterates and complicates the method of narrative developed in Monsieur and built on in the intervening novels of the Quintet.

As can be seen, the Quintet is not a strict departure from the Quartet. Instead it develops similar narrative concerns, such as the treatment of time and memory, but it goes further in its exploration of reality--what constitutes it and what causes it. Reed Way Dasenbrock's comment pertaining to Monsieur is applicable to the Quintet as a whole:

> Causality is not the real culprit, but the acceptance of a single causal explanation, the belief that any ordering is solid and true, The process of reading Monsieur is a continuous dislocation of such assumptions. The reader remains in a state of confusion as to what this novel is really about, when it takes place, and who ultimately is telling the story. This perfectly exemplifies the creative improvisation of art, a counterlife which refuses the

> world as it redeems it. One never knows where one is in *Monsieur* and that is the right place to be. ("Death and the Counterlife . . . " 325)

One never knows, at least not for very long, where one is in the Quintet, either, and that is also the place to be. Durrell clearly adheres to the view that art should not contribute to complacency. Instead, it should shake up the reader's perceptions, and invite the reader to explore new perceptions. By providing a proliferation of fictively real and fictively fictional characters, Durrell does precisely this.

Conclusion: The Intersection of Theme and Form

Lawrence Durrell has made a variety of literary contributions regarding the novel. Thematically, these fifteen novels that I have examined trace the various ways of gaining knowledge that are common in the twentieth century, with an emphasis on what Durrell perceives to be the most important method: love. Formally, these novels offer examples of various narrative structures ranging from the traditional to the experimental. And the intersection of the theme of love with the experimentation in multi-layered realities that culminates in the Quintet forces the reader to question the nature of reality and thus the nature of the self.

Thematically, as I have shown, Durrell's novels encompass many of the ways people learn about the world and themselves. In *Pied Piper of Lovers*, the Quartet, and the Quintet, religion is explored and discarded as an avenue to self-knowledge. In *The Dark Labyrinth*, *Tunc*, *Nunquam*, and the Quintet, psychoanalysis is explored, and although it is not discarded as is religion, it is seen to have limitations. *Tunc* and *Nunquam* also address the importance and influence of science and technology, and these novels clearly show the drawbacks to a culture in which profit and power are more important than human dignity and freedom. Philosphy infuses all the novels to varying degrees. And, as is obvious, all the novels are concerned with art, love, and sex. The commonality of these topics to all the novels is hardly coincidental.

As I have argued, art and sex are the two traditional ways of creating: one can create or procreate. In both cases, something of the creator lives on because, in effect, bringing works of art or children into the world is a way of becoming immortal. Being a creator is the best thing anyone can do, and Durrell gives no indication that artists are superior morally to non-artists. In fact, his view of mankind allows that all human beings are creators: if nothing else, they create their own lives, just as novelists create characters.

But, in order to create a life, either real or fictional, one must have the imagination to see what does not exist. New perceptions are crucial to creativity. Thus new means of knowledge must be sought. For Durrell, love is the way to enable oneself to see (or know) both oneself and the other. The fact that Durrell indicates in his novels that beneficial love is heterosexual, adult, and procreative is not at all a surprise when one realises the particular connection he makes between love and an improvement in human life. As Affad says, "We can make amends by loving correctly." By loving correctly, Durrell means that the male and female halves of a human being are joined, forming a complete being, one that is capable of reproducing itself. Such a view is truly conservative.

Formally, in regard to narrative, Durrell's novels reflect the changes made in the novel in this century. Of course, the changes or discoveries in narrative approaches are not mutually exclusive, nor does a change preclude the use of a previous mode. Durrell has experimented with shifting narrative voices, such as first and third person and various degrees of narrative filtering. He has also experimented with shifting time frames. And he has tried his hand at different genres of the novel, including science fiction and allegory.

The conservatism of Durrell's view of love, a conservatism that is likely not acceptable to all readers, spills over into his formal concerns, but in this case his stance is more tolerable. Although he is an innovator in terms of developing sets of novels that are not _roman fleuve_, he is careful to preserve the essential time constraints of the novel in that he is intensely concerned with the production of a story. People cannot exist out of time, and neither can novels. The novelist cannot abandon the basic temporal arrangement of the narrative construct that is a novel. And Durrell puts into the mouth of one character a line that brings together his thematic and formal concerns. Pursewarden says, "'The richest love is that which submits to the arbitration of time'" (856).

As we see in the Quintet, although time controls the novel, as it does human beings, the arrangement of the narrative construct can be disrupted, altered, and expanded by a new perception of fictional reality. Thus Durrell approaches his fundamental point about the importance of knowledge in two ways: through his theme of love and through the narrative form of the novels. In a sense, love becomes the narrative form: love enables the lover to read the text of the other, to gain understanding, to become whole. Durrell's goal for mankind--wholeness--is effected by the giving over of the self to another in sex.

This unification is also explained in paradoxical terms in the novels of the Quintet through the narrative fragmentation and the intentional confusion generated by the proliferation of fictional realities. Finding and maintaining beneficial love, according to Durrell, is as difficult as understanding the various levels of fiction presented in the Quintet. But both actions are helpful in the process of gaining self-knowledge and ultimately wholeness. Both love and narrative enable an individual to have new perceptions.

Notes

[1] The most important works apart from those referred to in the body of the text are the following:

1945. *Prospero's Cell: A Guide to the Landscape and Manners of Corcyra*. London: Faber and Faber.

1950. *Sappho: A Play in Verse*. London: Faber and Faber.

1953. *Reflections on a Marine Venus: A Companion to the Landscape of Rhodes*. London: Faber and Faber.

1957. *Bitter Lemons*. London: Faber and Faber.

---. *Esprit de Corps: Sketches from Diplomatic Life*. London: Faber and Faber.

---. *White Eagles over Serbia*. London: Faber and Faber.

1958. *Stiff Upper Lip: Life Among the Diplomats*. London: Faber and Faber.

1959. *Art and Outrage: A Correspondence about Henry Miller between Alfred Perles and Lawrence Durrell*. London: Putnam.

1962. *An Irish Faustus: A Morality in Nine Scenes*. London: Faber and Faber.

1964. *Acte: A Play*. London: Faber and Faber.

1966. *Sauve Qui Peut*. London: Faber and Faber.

1977. *Sicilian Carousel*. New York: Viking.

1978. *The Greek Islands*. London: Faber and Faber.

1980. *Collected Poems*: 1931-1974. Edited by James Brigham. London: Faber and Faber.

---. *A Smile in the Mind's Eye*. London: Wildwood House.

1981. *Literary Lifelines: The Richard Aldington-Lawrence Durrell Correspondence*. Edited by Ian S. MacNiven and Harry T. Moore. New York: Viking.

[2] In *The Art of Telling* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983), Frank Kermode notes that in a review of *A Room with a View*, Edward Garnett quotes from Forster's earlier novel *The Longest Journey* regarding Uncle Wille's query about making the story more obvious: "In truth it is not easy to explain the subtle quality of Mr. Forster's brilliant novel to Uncle Willie and his kinsfolk. . . . How can the

art of telling, this network woven of a succession of tiny touches, be brought home to Uncle Willie?" (9).

[3] See Joan Goulianos, "A Conversation with Lawrence Durrell About Art, Analysis, and Politics." (*Modern Fiction Studies* 17 (1971) 164.

[4] From an unpublished comment on *The Black Book* by T.S. Eliot dated 31 Jan. 1938, which is held in the Morris Library, Southern Illinois Uiversity at Carbondale, Collection 42, Box 1, Folder 1.

[5] Eliot.

[6] The refrain, *Quia amore langueo*, which means "because of love I languish," is the title of an anonymous fifteenth century poem. The poem can be found in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, edited by A.T. Quiller-Couch, published by the Clarendon Press in 1907, 35-39.

[7] One of the first indications of the importance of sex is the epigraphs to each of the novels. Five are from De Sade, one is from Freud, and one is from Stendhal. The quotations from De Sade and Freud have to do with the theme of sex and love while the quotation from Stendhal--"*Il faut que le roman raconte*" (396)--has to do with form.

[8] See John Paul Russo, "Love in Lawrence Durrell," *Prairie Schooner* 43 (1969-70): 396-407. Russo believes that "Durrell has no one 'theory' of love; he might be a severely limited novelist if he had. However, all the major characters in the *Quartet* do formulate theories, are given maximum freedom for expressing their theories and thus defining themselves"(398-399). Although Durrell does offer many different views of love and various sexual practices, I disagree with Russo that he does not have a consistent theory.

[9] See Ambrose Gordon, Jr., "Time, Space, and Eros" *The Alexandria Quartet* Rehearsed," *Six Contemporary Novels*, Ed. William O.S. Sutherland (Austin: U of Texas, 1962) 2-21. The improvement in Darley's sight counters Gordon's view that the kind of love Durrell elevates is that which blinds. Clearly many of the characters in the Quartet are blinded by love, but such love is criticised, not encouraged in the novels. Love, in Durrellian terms, offers insight.

[10] See Mary Graham Lund, "Durrell: Soft Focus on Crime," *Prairie Schooner* 35 (1961): 339-344. Lund falls into the trap of thinking that what Durrell is exposing he is also espousing. She says, "[T]he main theme of the *Quartet* is sexual love, the main object of the lovers to purify a personal love--to free it from greed, from politics, from

despair. Yet all love tends to be mirror-love, its true object not the beloved but the lover's projection of himself or herself. Justine is the supreme example of this" (343). Justine is indeed the supreme example of mirror-love, but Durrell's point is that such a love is not good or true. She is unable to free herself from greed, politics, or despair because of the impurity of her love.

[11] See Robert K. Morris, *Continuance and Change: The Contemporary British Novel Sequence* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1972). Morris says that Durrell's work shows that "[m]an, the sport of flux and uncertainty, remains the fallible but sole hope for discovering within himself and within the inexorable patterns of continuance, proof that something may at last order what appears more and more for our age those frightening, radical, and destructive, forces of change" (XX). See also W. R. Robinson, "Intellect and Imagination in *The Alexandria Quartet*," *Shenandoah* 18.4 (1967): 55-68. Robinson says, "Darley, as man and artist, then, is in pursuit of an awakening or illumination whereby love-truth will make him free. Liberated, his imagination, the creative principle in man, capable of love at its highest, that is, its most moral, and equipped with the wisdom following from self-knowledge, will be able to act as God reputedly did in creating the world, and in that act it will have returned to the pristine source of all being--it will have performed the aboriginal act" (60).

[12] See Walter J. Creed, *The Muse of Science and The Alexandria Quartet* (Norwood: Academic Monographs, 1977).

[13] Chapman makes this argument in his essay "Dead or Just Pretending: Reality in *The Alexandria Quartet*."

[14] Pursewarden refers to Darley as "Lineaments," which is actually short for Lineaments of Gratified Desire, a line from a poem by Blake. The poem is "The Question Answer'd":

> What is it men in women do require?
> The lineaments of Gratified Desire.
> What is it women in men do require?
> The lineaments of Gratified Desire.

15 See Frank Kermode, "Durrell and Others," *Puzzles and Epiphanies: Essays and Reviews 1958-1961* (London: Routledge, 1962) 214-27. Kermode praises *Mountolive* for its narrative method: ". . . *Mountolive* is distinguished from the others by its being uniformly impressive from beginning to end, partly, no doubt, because its narrative method involves far less merely rhetorical strain than that of the earlier volumes. There the need to produce a various and dazzling texture led to bursts of overwriting,

which an author so omnisciently in love with language would in any case--given the setting--find it hard to avoid" (219).

[16] See George Steiner, "Lawrence Durrell and the Baroque Novel," Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman (New York: Atheneum, 1967 280-87). Steiner sees Clea as a "drastic falling-off. It is a brittle, self-conscious gloss on the three preceding volumes. . . . [Durrell] took no risks and wrote a series of narrow variations on earlier themes. Thus Clea represents a distinct failure of nerve" (287). Because Steiner fails to see the time differential between Clea and the preceding novels, he also objects to Durrell's use of symbolism, in particular the rebirth of Clea. Without Clea and the possibilities of artistic and personal success created in it, the Quartet loses the shape of its theme.

[17] Durrell said: "It is impossible to be objective, but I honestly do not recall anything that remotely resembles the quartet from the point of view of form, unless it be the short novel of Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier. Perhaps there is something in Russian or German, but, if so, I have not come across it. Is it possible that I have been original?" ("Lawrence Durrell: An Exclusive Interview" 63). Durrell had not read this novel before he wrote the Quartet.

[18] Frank Kermode is an example of a critic who has problems with the Quartet, yet he still admires it. He says: "Yet this tetralogy, for all its fatigue-failures, its pretentiousness, its power to irritate, is punctuated throughout by conceptions of astonishing force, from the love-making of Narouz in Justine to the dead sailors of Clea; and it is an experiment of very great formal interest, a highly serious contribution to modern fiction" (Puzzles and Epiphanies 227). George Steiner is another. He says: "Anyone caring about the energies of English prose and the forms of prose fiction will have to come to grips with this strange, irritating work" ("Lawrence Durrell and the Baroque Novel" 287). Ronald Bryden comments: "No one, except possibly Lawrence Durrell, has attempted to build the kind of fictional 'world' one finds in Dickens, Hardy or Galsworthy. Golding and Durrell considered apart, a cross-section of British fiction in the past year [1959-60] looks from outside a lowland of ordinariness: of modest ambition and worthy, limited workmanship" ("British Fiction: 1959-60," International Literary Annual 3 [1961]: 41). V.S. Pritchett admires Durrell's picture of Alexandria, "one of the finer mirages in our writing" ("Alexandrian Hothouse" 30), but seems somewhat baffled by Durrell overall. Pritchett ends his essay on Durrell by saying, "He is unlike any novelist we

now have" (35).

[19] "Tunc" is also the name of a "small fertility God" (*Nunquam* 77) that Banubula uses to counteract a peculiar form of mass hysteria in which males believe that their genitals are disappearing. The importance of sex is reinforced by the use of the word in this way. "Tunc" also is featured in a crude anagram and diagram on page 79 of *Nunquam* in which the sexual application is unmistakable.

20 For example, the following reviews of *Tunc* were negative: Bernard Bergonzi, "Stale Incense," *New York Review of Books* 11 (11 July 1968): 37-39; Howard Junker, "The Lava Tongue," *Newsweek* 71 (8 Apr. 1968):126A-B; Gerald Sykes, "Durrell's 1984," *New York Times Book Review* (14 Apr. 1968): 4, 14; Edward Weeks, "Durrell's Black Humour," *Atlantic* 221 (May 1968): 109. The anonymous reviewer in "The Old Firm," *TLS* (25 Apr. 1968): 413 and Roderick Nordell, "He Sells the Shimmer," *Christian Science Monitor* (11 Apr. 1968): 13 were lukewarm. The following reviews were positive: Granville Hicks, "The End of Freedom for Felix," *Saturday Review* 51 (13 Apr. 1968): 37-8); G.S. Fraser, "By Courtesy of the Firm," *New Statesman* 75 (12 Apr. 1968): 483-84; Kenneth Rexroth, "A Steady Note of Mockery," *Nation* 206 (20 May 1968): 673-74; "Abel is the Novel, Merlin Is the Firm," *Time* 91 (5 Apr. 1968): 108. The reviews for *Nunquam*, which is more in the genre of science fiction than *Tunc*, were more overwhelmingly negative. For example, the following reviews were negative: Anthony Burgess, "Durrell and the Homunculi," *Saturday Review* 53 (21 Mar. 1970): 29-31, 41; Roderick Nordell, "Durrell among the Robots," *Christian Science Monitor* (26 Mar. 1970): 15; Christopher Ricks, "Female and Other Impersonators," *New York Review of Books* 15 (23 July 1970): 8; "The Long Arm of the Firm," *TLS* (26 Mar. 1970): 328; "Desire for Desire," *Time* 95 (18 May 1970): 88.

[21] For example, the following reviews were negative: Paul Theroux, "Hypotenused," *New Statesman* 88 (18 Oct. 1974): 544; Jane Larkin Crain, "New Books," *Saturday Review* 2 (8 Feb. 1975): 29; Roderick Nordell, "Durrell's Literary Bravura," *Christian Science Monitor* (3 Mar. 1975): 7; Julian Barnes, "Trick or Treat," *New Statesman* 96 (22 Sept. 1978): 378; Alastair Forbes, "Dwarves Abounding in Provence," *New York Times Book Review* (22 Apr. 1979): 14.

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